

1 **Official**

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3 **AGENDA**

4 **HOOKSETT PLANNING BOARD MEETING**
5 **HOOKSETT TOWN HALL CHAMBERS (Room 105)**

6 **35 Main Street**

7 **Monday, November 1, 2021**

8 **6:00 PM**

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10 **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:00 P.M.**

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12 **PROOF OF POSTING**

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14 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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16 **INTRODUCE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

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18 **PRESENT: Chris Stelmach (Vice-Chairman), Don Winterton, Matt Reed, Mike Somers, Paul**
19 **Scarpetti, and David Boutin (Town Council Representative)**

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21 **ALTERNATES: Sheena Gilbert, Robert Duhaime, and Denise Pichette Volk**

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23 **EXCUSED: Tom Walsh (Chairman)**

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25 **NOT PRESENT:**

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27 **STAFF: Andre Garron (Town Administrator) and Nicholas Williams (Town Planner)**

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29 **R. Duhaime will be a voting member this evening.**

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31 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 18, 2021**

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33 **October 18, 2021 Meeting – P. Scarpetti motioned to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2021**
34 **meeting. Seconded by D. Winterton with the following amendments:**

35 ***Line 381 and 382: The first sentence should be replaced to say: “If they build condos does someone***
36 ***get one for \$100,000 because he is subsidized, and I have to subsidize the workforce units?”***

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38 ***Line 29: S. Gilbert and D. Pichette Volk voted.***

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40 **Motion carried with a vote of 7-0.**

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44 **APPOINTMENT**

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46 **1. BRUCE THOMAS, TOWN ENGINEER**

47 **Memorandum of Understanding between Town of Hooksett and Granite Woods Develop-**
48 **ment JV, LLC**

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50 Bruce Thomas (Town Engineer): We are trying to make an agreement with Granite Woods. Granite
51 Woods would provide the funding and construct a pump station at Tri Town arena, run the sewer line
52 southerly through that neighborhood, up Rt. 3A, up Cross Road, across a couple of state properties, and
53 across their property to Hackett Hill Road. They would fund the cost from the pump station up to their
54 property line. That cost is \$7 million. Granite Woods would do all of the work and turn it over to the
55 town who would own it. We would give them rebates of 60% of their taxes for 15 years once the devel-
56 opment is complete. The sewer and water is being designed by Underwood Engineering and is almost
57 complete. We would make sure we have an active role in selecting a contractor to make sure everything
58 is going according to all guidelines. Underwood would do the construction, some construction admin-
59 istration, and inspections to make sure everything is done in accordance to guidelines. Town Council
60 has asked a lot of questions and the agreement is currently under review by our town attorney. We
61 think we have a good deal and hope to proceed. This work will get done at no initial cost to the town.
62 This is groundbreaking deal and I do not think anyone has done it before.

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64 D. Winterton: Is this totally informational or would you like input from the board?

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66 B. Thomas: It is informational but you can provide input.

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68 D. Winterton: At the Town Council meeting there was some discussion about moving the TIF district.
69 What are the consequences of doing that? The TIF district is designed on a percentage of property val-
70 ues. Moving the district might throw a wrench into this, and I want the town to be careful.

71
72 B. Thomas: SNHPC is reviewing adding two parcels to the TIF district. Town Council said sewer
73 would be leaving the TIF district and then coming back in. Those two parcels are outside of the TIF
74 district. We do not think it would be a problem to add them but we do not know if we have to add them
75 or not. I have a question into the town attorney about the legality of adding those two parcels.

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77 D. Winterton: This whole memo is separate from the TIF district. The main building is in the TIF dis-
78 trict and the taxes from that building would go to pay off the TIF. The fact that some of it goes outside
79 the TIF district, I do not see how that applies.

80
81 Peter Bartash: I agree with that because the 60% reimbursement that the property would be receiving
82 is to the property's uplifted taxes which are going to then pay for the work, while also paying into the
83 TIF district. There are multiple layers of benefits to that.

84
85 P. Scarpetti: I did the math on some of the repayment. 40% goes to the town, 60% goes to the devel-
86 oper. At that rate, with today's dollars, over \$13 million would go back to the developer, not including
87 tax increases. If we had a large tax increase that would be a huge loss to the town. They are going to be
88 getting paid back for the infrastructure they are putting in. Why not give them the \$1.5 million, or
89 whatever the assessment is, every year until it is paid off, which would be less than five years. Then 15
90 years from now they could be paying \$3 million in taxes. That would be \$25 million back to the town. I
91 would rather pay it off and get it behind us. You would only have to the carry the cost of the interest for

92 five years, you would get water and sewer to your property, and the value of the property would in-
93 crease.

94
95 P. Bartash: There is a piece of framing to this. It is not specifically just this work benefiting our prop-
96 erty alone. The idea of installing a pump station, paying for it privately, and installing two miles worth
97 of water and sewer lines to bring to this site is an unprecedented ask from my position. It is not some-
98 thing that it is solely benefiting us. A goal the town has had, as part of its TIF district, is to get this
99 work done and to bring water and sewer to this side of the highway. Per the current setup of the TIF
100 district that work is years away. We are here and ready to execute now. The purpose of this MOU is to
101 be a mechanism to accelerate the timeline of getting that work done within the TIF district. It also al-
102 lows the town to continue its work at Exit 10 so both happen at the same time. Because we are doing
103 the work privately, the cost of our capital is higher than if the town were to borrow a municipal bond.
104 The total amount repaid with the math behind the agreement reflects that amount. The economics is de-
105 signed to be within the range of inflation so that it is effectively a break even deal to us as developers.
106 To your point about the town and the benefits the town is receiving, looking at the tax and the reim-
107 bursement of a portion of that tax, is a narrow view on a much boarder economic implication for this
108 area. Water and sewer get installed and this property is not the only one that benefits. The two proper-
109 ties that are commercially zoned on the edge of Hackett Hill Road have the benefit to connect to mu-
110 nicipal services. This would get water and sewer to the Ritchie Brothers parcel so they are able to start
111 turning that into a profitable property for the town. At the intersection of Hackett Hill Road and Rt. 3A
112 is the same thing. The long term value increase to the town is exponential. This is all happening at our
113 risk. We are the ones who are guaranteeing the money. We are saying we are willing to do this at cost.
114 It is not an overreach for us to say that term is something that we need to at least hedge our risk to it
115 because we are on the hook for that note no matter what.

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117 D. Boutin: What if the town put half of the improvements in play and Granite Woods decides to sell
118 the property? What assurances does the town have that the project would be finished in accordance
119 with the agreement that you are signing?

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121 P. Bartash: There are two components of the MOU that have to do with assignability of the document.
122 The first is we only have the rights to assign the document to an affiliated entity. That is for us mechan-
123 ically on the financing side if we need something like a special purpose vehicle, or an LLC specific for
124 the water and sewer work. It also gives the town discretion to assign that agreement to another entity
125 and requires that all of the requirements of the agreement be enforced and in place. There is no buyer
126 that would buy the property without the benefits of this agreement. It also gives the town discretion in
127 being able to assign that agreement which, I would imagine, would be a condition of an acquisition of
128 the property. That is not our business plan or what we are planning to do. As far as the timing of the
129 work, we will need to start the work immediately which is part of having the MOU. The timing of the
130 delivery of our facility and the sewer need to line up so a tenant can connect when they are ready to
131 take on occupancy. There is no scenario where we are spending in one place and not the other without
132 finishing both because they are interconnected.

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134 D. Boutin: How long will construction be before the building is ready for occupancy?

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136 P. Bartash: We are being told, by our contractors, including the work portion is twelve months to build
137 the core and shell. There will likely be a four to six month fit out period for the tenant which would put
138 us at about 18 months end to end before occupancy.

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B. Thomas: If they left town, any work that has been done would be under the ownership of the town. I will take a look at the suggestion of paying this off in five years. The way it is now the town would get \$400,00 to 500,000 of revenue for at least 15 years. That money would be put into other improvements, maybe by Exit 10. There is a benefit to stretching it out over 15 years.

R. Duhaime: No matter what improvements are in the TIF district, right now that percentage is in the TIF district. If we sign this memo that all goes to the sewer project and devalues what will be contributed to the rest of the TIF district. Currently the town is designing all three phases. We have already put the lines under the river. That is another \$825,000, not including the engineering. Underwood is designing and doing this, but should the town hire another engineer for this project so the town can do its own engineering inspections. Bruce would you take that on, get an assistant engineer, or a consultant?

B. Thomas: We would probably want to get a consultant. Most of the work would be the pump station and would be full time. I think we should use Underwood.

R. Duhaime: I was thinking of a cost savings. Materials keep driving the cost up.

P. Bartash: Currently, the revenue of that parcel in the TIF district is \$19,252. That is slightly different than in 2020 annualizing a six month bill. The idea that somehow 60% reimbursement is a loss in revenue to the TIF district seems a little bit of a contradiction to me. There is currently no \$1.5 million of revenue to the TIF district nor will there be if this water and sewer improvement does not get installed. Separating the two is not the full picture. We are making sure there is a current term increase for that period of 15 years so there is an incremental increase that unlocks the potential for other projects in the area to fully pay into the district.

R. Duhaime: Technically the town is paying for that because they are giving you 60%. The town is paying for the infrastructure. The only people paying the increase is everyone else that gets on the sewer line. You won't be paying any increase for 15 years. You will be paying usage and sewer line fees, but those taxes will be deferred for 15 years. The rest of the TIF district is increasing in value and paying into the TIF. That is the financing the town voters have already voted for Phase 1. We are already doing this, but we don't have 15 years on any other project in this district.

Andre Garron (Town of Hooksett, Administrator): This was presented to the Town Council at their last meeting. They agreed to conduct a public hearing to modify the existing TIF plan. The original TIF plan was approved on March 23, 2017. That included Exits 10 and 11. To modify the plan so we can react to this way of refinancing the project is what that meeting is about. I would also like to go over what the MOU allows us to do. We initiated this plan in 2019. We hired Underwood with engineering and planning. We asked where we wanted to put the water and sewer lines first. We decided to start at Exit 10, Zones 1 and 2. That is where our focus has been to put another pump station and another line under the Merrimack River. We are exploring possibly expanding the TIF district. This MOU would allow us to have two projects happening at the same time. The developers came forward and said they would finance it. They are building our planned infrastructure. There is nothing on this plan we have not designed. This is our plan. They are just implementing it. The one change between the original TIF district and what is being proposed is who is funding it. The town got a \$2.5 million bond on the first one for the line to go under the river, and for planning and engineering for this to move forward. The 60% of the financing that we will derive from the benefit of the project will go to the town debt. This

186 allows us to do everything else in that district. We are deriving an income for 15 years. The way we are
187 doing this will allow funding to do some other things to the TIF district as well. This is unique. The
188 original TIF district in 2005 was a new concept as well. This is a more advanced concept. This will go
189 to the debt that will fund our infrastructure.

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191 C. Stelmach: Is 40/60 standard?

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193 A. Garron: In the original TIF District 100% of the revenue went towards satisfying the debt or fund-
194 ing the TIF district. I like the 60/40 because it covers the debt. We can use the 40% within the district
195 to help fund other phases of the district.

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197 D. Winterton: I would like to complement Bruce, Andre, and the applicant for designing a very unique
198 way of funding. The only other way we could fund this is go to the voters to get a \$7 million bond.
199 While that is happening there would be no construction. This unique process allows us to do it another
200 way. It seems like there is an impression the 60/40 is a way for the developer to make a couple extra
201 bucks on the deal. Maybe the MOU could be designed so that they would get rebated 60% up until a
202 number that would cover their cost of financing. If we could figure out a way that we could maximize
203 that 60% I think that would be fair for all parties. I don't think the applicant should profit, but they
204 should not be at risk of going under. With the 40% look at all we could get done and what those proper-
205 ties would be worth. The potential of going forward with this plan and what it could do for the town is
206 enormous.

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208 P. Bartash: It is unfortunate, but there is a fundamental mistrust of these processes and developers. If
209 you break up the cost of these improvements, \$1.9 million of that cost is just running the lines on our
210 property. We are not asking to be reimbursed for that. We can explore setting a cap. That does require
211 us to take additional risk. We are trying to be as specific and narrow as possible to be fair, and to pro-
212 vide some protection for both parties. This work occurs over an extended period of time. We want to
213 make sure there is room for us to work. There is also nothing saying that as we get to the last stage of
214 the design it doesn't cost more by the nature of it costing more. We are thinking of some of those fac-
215 tors as we go into this.

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217 P. Scarpetti: The dollars are so variable right now. You have a cap of 2.39% on those dollars as to how
218 much it can increase on the tax rate.

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220 P. Bartash: That is not a cap. When we put together the economic model, to understand the correct
221 split, we had to assume a future tax rate increase using a standard base line matrix. We chose to use a
222 metric equivalent to the writ of inflation with a general industry standard. It could increase or decrease.
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224 P. Scarpetti: If the tax rate went up 5% for all properties, your's would stay at 2.39%?

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226 P. Bartash: No. That is not what we are saying.

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228 M. Somers: By paying 40% of the tax rate, if the taxes double they are still paying 40% of the doubled
229 tax rate.

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231 P. Scarpetti: They are still benefiting because they are not paying 60% for 15 years.

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P. Bartash: If we are in a position that in five years we have increased the value of this district such that a tax rate increases 20%, I think a value recognition for that is fair to us.

P. Scarpetti: Andre says we need the 40%, but when you do this work the other properties will increase and we will be getting money from those. I don't think we need to focus so much on that 40%. I think someone needs to do the math doing this versus paying you back early and the interest. This is too much of a variable to the town.

D. Pichette Volk: Is the document we are looking at the one presented to Town Council, then to the town attorney for review? Was there anything the Town Council wanted reviewed specifically?

A. Garron: Town legal counsel reviewed this before it went to the Town Council and we integrated his comments into the MOU. Then the Town Council had questions on that. The version you have is the one that went to Town Council on October 27, 2021.

D. Pichette Volk: Is a town hearing scheduled?

A. Garron: It will be scheduled.

D. Pichette Volk: Will the Town Council need to make a formal approval or recommendation of this?

B. Thomas: Yes.

D. Pichette Volk: Will the Planning Board have to make a recommendation?

A. Garron: The Town Council and Town Administrator have the final say. We wanted to come to the Planning Board to address any concerns.

D. Pichette Volk: Is there a presumption the parcels in Zone 3 should, could, or would be added before final action?

B. Thomas: No. The question is whether we can leave the TIF district and go back in.

D. Pichette Volk: The Town Council will have a public hearing and then take action to add parcels?

A. Garron: Yes. We are well below the acreage and threshold even if we were to consider adding both of those parcels.

D. Boutin: I am on the TIF advisory counsel. The TIF advisory board has approved this agreement. Based on Town Council review there might be some small edits. Whenever there is something new or different it raises people's concerns. At the end of the day this advances us way beyond anything we would be able to do as a town.

R. Duhaime: Developers in town sometimes feel like they get the bad end of the stick. The idea of that process is they finance everything themselves. In this case you are asking for \$7 million. We usually do a 10 year CIP. The previous TIF district on Exit 10 was eight or nine years and was paid off in advance. Maybe we should put it to the taxpayers and pull a bond.

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P. Bartash: As far as the process, in the last 18 months the cost of steel has risen close to \$8 million. That brings the project to the point of almost being non-feasible, and I have heard those increases are likely to continue. What happens if we wait and the town votes to approve the bond and this project is no longer feasible. Now the town has the right to extract the bond with no TIF revenue to pay for it. What does that look like for the town?

R. Duhaime: The town was planning to move forward with the first section. I assumed once all of the engineering was done for Zone 1 we would move to Zone 2. Once that was finished we would move to Zone 3. That is changing now that you are moving forward. No developer has ever come to this town and asked for that kind of infrastructure and cost. The only reason we spent that money at Exit 10 was the state mandated the traffic intersection in the roads so we didn't have a choice or the development would not move forward. You, as the developer, are saying you will cut one check. That seems generous, but we are not in the business of helping developers develop their property. We are here for the quality of life for the citizens of the town. Fifteen years from now we will finally get the full tax rate to the town.

D. Winterton: Is this project ever coming back to the Planning Board for another vote?

N. Williams: This is an informational session. This is satisfying one of the conditions of the planning entitlement approval. It will not be coming to the Planning Board for a vote. The public hearing on that has been closed.

D. Winterton: If it were coming back for another vote, I would be hesitant to speak at the public hearing. If it is not I would be excited to speak at the public hearing in favor of this.

M. Reed: It says the town is responsible for getting the right-of ways and easements. Is there a timeline for that?

B. Thomas: There is no deadline, but we want to get those as soon as possible. All of the easements are written up and we are working on getting them signed.

P. Bartash: There is no penalty from a timing perspective.

B. Thomas: The goal is to have the easements in place once the project gets to that phase.

P. Scarpetti: I want to see this happen. I appreciate you coming and doing this, and going before the TIF and talking about this. I think the tax assessor should look at this and see exactly how much the developer will benefit and how much the town will benefit. This should be looked at from the town's benefit.

B. Thomas: Not from the assessor's standpoint.

P. Scarpetti: There should be a final amount of money that will be paid. It should not be left open.

P. Bartash: Until the project goes out to bid we will not know the final cost. We have done an initial analysis to see the cost to the TIF and borrower.

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P. Scarpetti: The town should have a rough idea about how much we are giving up.

M. Somers: He does not know how much it will cost. We do not know what steel will cost. There should be some discussion about some mechanism put in place with a threshold of what a number might be. There has to be some give and take.

P. Bartash: Currently, no one will commit to a price on steel pipe. It is getting priced daily.

M. Somers: They are willing to take on this risk, and I think it is a real opportunity for the town.

S. Gilbert: What is the intention for this site?

P. Bartash: We have obtained a zoning use variance for a 500,000 sq. ft. distribution facility.

S. Gilbert: Can Exit 11 support that, from a traffic perspective?

R. Duhaime: This has already been approved.

P. Bartash: One of the conditions of the approval was to coordinate between the town and the State of NH DOT to finalize an off-site transportation road improvement strategy at the intersection of Hackett Hill Road and the toll road and Hackett Hill Road and Rt. 3A. As part of our application process we, as a project, have committed to fund \$1,110,000 in total traffic improvements at this intersection.

S. Gilbert: I saw something in the MOU about traffic.

B. Thomas: The round-about could still move forward in the future. The state's portion of the funding is still in place.

S. Gilbert: Is there a way for us to take care of all of these projects at once so this is only ripped up once?

B. Thomas: If all of the funds could be approved at the same time, but it is a long shot.

D. Boutin: Granite Woods and the applicant have been very straight forward with us and have not taken advantage of the town in any way. I am impressed with the agreement. Bruce deserves a lot of credit for this. I have told him that he needs to make sure the town is held harmless. This will create so many opportunities on the Rt. 3A corridor. The next time this goes to the Town Council on November 17, 2021 there will be a vote.

D. Boutin motioned to deliver a message to the Town Council that the Planning Board agrees with the concept of the Memorandum of Understanding between Town of Hooksett and Granite Woods Development JV, LLC

D. Winterton: The purpose of the public hearing is to make an amendment to the TIF district to allow this type of private financing.

374 A. Garron: Typically the TIF district takes into account the town taking on the debt. In this case, the
375 developer would be taking on the debt, but everything else would be operating in accordance with the
376 TIF district. That one modification needs to be approved by the Town Council before it can move for-
377 ward.

378
379 D. Winterton: The Town Council will decide whether this MOU, or a revised one, is one the Town
380 Council feels they can sign. Will that take place in the same night?

381
382 A. Garron: The first will be considered. If that is approved the second will be considered.

383
384 *D. Winterton seconded D. Boutin's motion and amended to add the Planning Board advises the*
385 *Town Council to support the adaptation of the TIF district to allow this type of private financing. D.*
386 *Boutin accepted D. Winterton's amendment and provided a second to the amended motion.*

387
388 **Roll Call**

389 **D. Winterton: Yes**

390 **D. Boutin: Yes**

391 **M. Somers: Yes**

392 **P. Scarpetti: Yes**

393 **R. Duhaime: No**

394 **M. Reed: Yes**

395 **C. Stelmach: No**

396

397 **Motion carries with a vote of 5-2.**

398

399 P. Bartash: I have been impressed with town staff and land use boards. we appreciate the support and
400 are genuinely trying to do something that is good for the community.

401

402 **CONTINUED APPLICATION**

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404 **1. DONALD C. & SONIA A. PARE #2021-20**

405 **279 Hackett Hill Road, Map 28, Lot 2**

406 **2 lot subdivision**

407 **(Public hearing was closed on September 20, 2021)**

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409 Rob Degan (S & H Land Services): We updated the plan. There was a request to show a possible
410 house location and driveway. We added that to sheet 2. We got put on hold last month because Roger
411 Belisle had a problem with our boundary. We had a meeting with him last week and he seemed to be
412 satisfied.

413

414 N. Williams: I spoke with Mr. Belisle. It is my understanding Mr. Belisle is agreeable to the original
415 survey.

416

417 Donald Pare (Owner): I walked the property with Mr. Belisle. We met with S&H's office and came to
418 the agreement that it wasn't worth the sliver that Mr. Belisle owned. For him to hire Holden to do a sur-
419 vey was not worth the money.

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421 *D. Winterton motioned to approve a 2 lot subdivision for Donald C. & Sonia A. Pare, #2021-20, 279*
422 *Hackett Hill Road, Map 28, Lot 2, conditionally upon obtaining a signed notarized approval from*
423 *Mr. Belisle before the plan is signed. Seconded by D. Boutin. Motion carried unanimously with a*
424 *vote of 7-0.*

426 BOARD DISCUSSION

427 **2. MASTER PLAN DRAFT REVIEW**

428 The Master plan updates are comprised of the suggestions of the committee this board put together and
431 public outreach.

432
433 *D. Boutin motioned to table the master plan draft review so that the members of the board can re-*
434 *view the draft plan and present the board with specific recommendations at the next meeting or a*
435 *special meeting to give the board a chance to thoroughly review the document and come up with*
436 *changes or suggestions.*

437
438 D. Pichette Volk: I would recommend sending this to the Town Council as is. It should be added that
439 the master plan should be periodically monitored for progress. We could somehow represent that we
440 support additional administrative staff within the whole planning process to carry out the monitoring
441 and execution of the master plan.

442
443 D. Boutin: The Planning Board, at one meeting once a year, will receive an update from the town plan-
444 ner on the progress of the master plan, about what is happening, where it is going, and if there are any
445 changes.

446
447 R. Duhaime: If you accept this master plan, this board has to be willing to vote the way the master plan
448 reads. This master plan is what the town wants. It is the view of the constituents, and we need to sup-
449 port what the constituents want.

450
451 A. Garron: Deciding to move forward is the most difficult part of a master plan. This gets referred to
452 for policies that will be adopted by Town Council and zoning ordinances and regulations. The only
453 way this will be followed is by having an annual review. Housing seems to be an issue. There are rec-
454 ommendations in your master plan. Economic development is in here. Town Council is anxious for this
455 board to move forward because we will all refer to it.

456
457 S. Gilbert: How would we attack this if we were a business. They have planned partners. We are not
458 the only ones accountable to this. A lot of sub-committees will need to be formed to make these things
459 happen. Some of the things overlap. How do we prioritize the items? How do we hold ourselves ac-
460 countable? How do we report to our town?

461
462 R. Duhaime: I think we should go through this thoroughly.

463
464 D. Boutin: We will never attack all of the problems at the same time. An annual review has never hap-
465 pened and I think that should be added.

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467 *Seconded by D. Winterton. Motion carried unanimously with a vote of 7-0.*

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A. Garron: We have to separate our personal feelings between our view and what the public wants.

The next Master Plan draft review will be held November 22, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

BUSINESS OCCUPANCY

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

D. Boutin motioned to adjourn at 7:51 pm. Seconded by D. Winterton. Motion carried unanimously with a vote of 7-0.

The next meeting of the Planning Board will be held November 15, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

/s/ AnnMarie Scott

**AnnMarie Scott
Recording Clerk**