

**JOINT MEETING OF  
THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
AND  
THE GREATER DOWNTOWN TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT  
ADVISORY BOARD**

**June 21, 2011**

**MINUTES**

**EDA and GDTIF Members Present:** Hope Taylor, Rick Monahon, Jeffrey Crocker, Craig Hicks, Cy Gregg, Jack Burnett, Susan Phillips-Hungerford and Willard Williams.

**Also Present:** Carol Ogilvie, Director and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development; Rodney Bartlett, Director of Public Works.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by EDA Chairman Hicks. He noted the first item on the agenda was an update on the Downtown Granite Block from Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. Bartlett began by noting the Granite Block has been under consideration for a number of months and that a meeting with an architect about the renovation was scheduled. He noted the potential impacts to the utilities, concerns on parking and timeframes. “We are looking at visits to the Planning Board and the ZBA in July” he said adding “it is moving forward and hopefully we will see some plans on it shortly.”

Chair Hicks thanked Mr. Bartlett and skipped to item four on the agenda (while awaiting a quorum for the Greater Downtown TIF as item three required a request for funding and a GDTIF/EDA vote).

Mr. Bartlett addressed this item. He began by noting “I don’t want this to turn into a bridge meeting *but*.” Mr. Bartlett proceeded to give a brief update on the bridge and retaining wall. He referred to a letter that went out to the EDA, the GDTIF and Heritage Commission noting the importance of local involvement in these projects and instruction on how to become a consulting party in the decision making process. He confirmed that the project had become too large and that it was not a New Hampshire State Bridge project any longer. He briefly reviewed the potential of federal funding and reiterated the importance and the need for all interested parties to be a consultant to the project. “This will keep you in the loop through the process” he said adding “through 2015 if not longer.”

Chair Hicks noted “the EDA would like to be involved” and asked “do we need to vote?” Ms. Ogilvie noted it would be appropriate to vote. A motion was made/seconded (Burnett/Hungerford) with all in favor.

The arrival of Willard Williams created a quorum for the GDTIF and another motion was made/seconded (Hicks/Monahon) that the Greater Downtown TIF also become a consulting party with all in favor. Mr. Gregg recused himself from both the discussion and the vote.

With a GDTIF quorum item three on the agenda was discussed. This agenda item is a request of the GDTIF Advisory Board to fund a proposal for a conceptual design relative to the parking layout in the area of Depot, School and Wall Streets. Mr. Bartlett noted the general scope of service would be a review of the parking in the Depot lot as well as private parking areas. "There may be some opportunity to consider the entire area as a single space" he said adding "we would like to see how that space can be used overall." Mr. Bartlett went on to note that a proposal from Hoyle, Tanner & Associates (HTA) had been received with a professional services fee of \$5,500.00 to get the job done.

Mr. Bartlett noted "HTA will look at the entire area as a single parking area and identify if there is an advantage to combine all the space for parking." He added "the wall, trees and utilities are all incumbent on parking." He reiterated the value of the potential of combining parking design with the public and private areas.

Chair Hicks noted the trees in the lot "were not the finest specimens" and asked about the landscaping. Mr. Bartlett briefly reviewed a plan to make the pedestrian traffic friendlier with a walking path and landscaping. Chair Hicks asked about the potential for one way (vehicular) traffic either School Street to Depot Street or vice versa and a brief discussion about the current flow of traffic, restaurant and retail delivery and parking followed. Mr. Monahon interjected (one way traffic) "kind of runs contrary to all the efforts that have gone into signage and that kind of thing." Mr. Willard agreed adding "it is best as it is (now)."

Ms. Phillips-Hungerford suggested looking back at Downtown 2000 and asked about the design process. Mr. Bartlett replied "oh there will be a whole public process associated with it" adding "but this would be to identify conceptually what can and what cannot be done. Then we get to the process."

An audience member asked about net gain "it may look better and flow better but in the end do we want to do all this for 2 or 4 spaces? We need full-day parking." Mr. Monahon asked about two level parking. He mentioned Hanover, New Hampshire and their facility "just west of Main Street which is a down half and an up half structure, giving double performance of the parking level." Ms. Phillips-Hungerford interjected "and remember, the structure that used to be there (in the Depot lot) was five stories" Chair Hicks suggested a potential for a multi-level parking facility with retail on the first floor and a brief discussion about a parking garage followed.

Mr. Bartlett noted that creating a parking structure cost in the vicinity of \$30,000.00 for each space. He added "what comes out of this is much less expensive and would not preclude a structure in the future."

A member of the audience asked how much money was in the GDTIP bank account with Ms. Ogilvie replying "about \$70,000.00."

The members discussed the initial steps of the proposal which included a site visit and a walk around, evaluation of potential, and preparation of two conceptual schematic plans for consideration. Chair Hicks noted “this is the first time we have looked at private property, its the first time we have looked at it this way.” He added “we may be getting ahead of ourselves because we don’t have any money number one, but it could be an option added at a later date, we don’t have to necessarily draw it now. Just keep it simple but contemplate the future, something to keep in mind” he said. Another member interjected “(parking) is an ongoing problem for us. The more we find out now the better off we’ll be.” Still another member noted “we have been kicking this can down the road for a long time now.” Mr. Monahon suggested they go for it. “Let them study it and remember future planning for a multi-level structure could be part of it – let them respond to that” he said.

A brief discussion about the streetscape of the downtown followed. Ms. Vann noted “if we do a structure it should be multi-use rather than just a parking garage. Our street front is so important to us, it is really important in a town this size.” Mr. Crocker asked about the two schematics with Mr. Bartlett explaining “we’ll look at the public and the private parking areas as a separate plan and then combine them and look at it as another plan.” He went on to add “we will see what we gain or don’t gain but we will get through that exercise first and then come and talk to the property owners.” Mr. Bartlett noted public hearings would be held at different times of the day to allow as much public participation as possible.

Mark Fernald suggested the design “study all the options now” adding “if you do a structure the least expensive is a half up/half down.” He added “get a rough price, see what it would look like and find out what the neighbors think.”

Mr. Crocker suggested the schematics come after the review process was completed. He noted that if after that process “if there is no net gain with the real estate we have, there is no point in creating conceptuels.” He added “you should then transfer the money for a conceptual to looking at other options.”

When asked about other options such as new undeveloped land Mr. Bartlett replied “this is about Grove, Main, School and Depot Streets where everything is either building or hot top.” An audience member noted many of the private parking areas “are empty after 5:00 p.m. until the next morning” adding “those could be utilized.” He went on to recommend “less expensive and more intuitive options to look at the dynamics of opening up spaces.” He noted hold harmless clauses for the private land owners. The spaces are tow-away zones right now” he said, adding “there are no signs that say welcome to our parking lot.” He added there should be signs with arrows pointing the way to evening and weekend visitor parking as opposed to “good luck, we hope you find a parking space.” Another audience member noted that after business hours and evening parking is not the problem, “it is the all-day weekday parking that is a problem.” A brief discussion about satellite parking and shuttles followed. Chair Hicks suggested they stick to the proposal at hand “and then task someone to figure out what we need.”

Ms. Vann suggested contacting the town attorney to create an agreement with the private owners and make up a sandwich board. “Get a simple hold harmless, have the private property owners sign off and get a sign” she said, “In its simplest form that is how it should work” replied Chair

Hicks. Mr. Monahon interjected “Until you have talked with the property owner you don’t know.” He then suggested the EDA or the GDTIF (or both) go to the Board of Selectmen for further action.

Mr. Williams again noted the problem with daytime parking. He asked Mr. Bartlett about how many spaces may be generated. “Five, ten?” he asked. Mr. Bartlett replied “another ten easily but the owners of 14 and 20 Grove will play a key role in how that is managed.” Mr. Williams responded by noting “10 spaces for \$5500.00 is a good deal. That is a worthy expenditure.”

A motion was made/seconded (Crocker/Monahon) to approve the expenditure of \$5500.00 for a conceptual design relative to the parking space layout and aisle configuration in the area of Depot, School and Wall Streets via the proposal offered by HTA. Mr. Gregg recused himself from both the discussion and the vote, all others were in favor.

In closing it was noted that construction “is highly disruptive.” A brief discussion about long term strategies followed. One gentleman suggested “I highly recommend you dovetail it with the bridge project.” He noted the parking and traffic flow problems as well as staging areas for equipment, materials and workers “I can see the area behind the Diner being taken into a vortex and we won’t see it again for two years.” He added “we are dealing with an unsavory situation here but we know we will have a start and we will have a finish.”

Mr. Edwards asked if the town might expect and state or federal funding and a brief discussion about limited funding (CDBG, TIF revenues etc.) followed. Mr. Bartlett concluded by noting “outside funding will be limited at best.”

Ms. Ogilvie reminded the Chairman that the EDA must vote on the expenditure for the proposal submitted by HTA. A motion was made/seconded (Hungerford/Crocker). Once again Mr. Gregg recused himself with all others in favor.

Chair Hicks noted another meeting would be called “in July sometime.”

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton  
Administrative Assistant