

Minutes – December 9, 2020 Hudson Economic Development Commission Meeting 6:30 pm.
Held Virtually Via Zoom

Mr. Bill Sullivan called the meeting called to order at 6:30 pm.

Members present: Bill Sullivan, Tom Davis, Chuck Randall, Sara Foster, and Tom Ricci

Others present: Kristina Johnson, Acting Director of Planning & Community Development.

- 1) **Discussion on pandemic response-** Kristina Johnson provided an overview of the response efforts led by the Town and by the Business Improvement District (BID). She noted that Town Hall is still currently closed to the public, and staff have been handling business by appointment only. Ms. Johnson further stated that the Downtown BID has pivoted from its core activities to offer the services of a tax consultant to help businesses prepare PPP applications, and sponsored a first annual Holiday Lights contest for Downtown Businesses and Hudson residents.
- 2) **Discussion on the state commercial/industrial real estate-** Bill Sullivan led a discussion on the state of commercial and industrial real estate, and noted in general throughout North America, office and retail markets have been stagnant. Mr. Sullivan noted that there is an uptick in prospective office tenants looking for 2,000-5,000 square feet of space, and he announced that BJ's Wholesale Club is opening in Marlborough, which he believes will have a positive impact on the Town of Hudson. Chuck Randall noted that after the first few months of the pandemic he was able to fill all of his vacancies Downtown with the exception of the restaurant space.
- 3) **Town of Hudson Updates-** Kristina Johnson provided an update on the following projects and initiatives underway in the Town of Hudson.

15 Broad Street – the building was demolished in late October and the work was completed in under a week. The Town of Hudson does not own parcel and is in litigation with the owner who is in arrears. Ms. Johnson noted that there is some supplemental testing that will need to be completed in the immediate future, which will determine the extent of additional cleanup measures that will need to take place before the Town will take ownership of the property and develop a municipal parking lot.

62 Packard Street- The Town ,in partnership with the Affordable Housing Trust, is pursuing the redevelopment of this site (which is the old Police Station) into an affordable housing development. Ms. Johnson noted that over the past year, a Packard Street Re-use Committee (ad hoc committee appointed by the Select Board) discussed illustrative site design alternatives, gained an understanding of the complex financing scenarios for affordable housing developments, and most importantly, developed flexible guidelines to provide a prospective developer with general direction with respect to building siting and scale, buffering and landscaping, architectural design, and parking. Ms. Johnson noted

that Town Meeting in November 2020 approved the transfer of the 62 Packard Street property to the Affordable Housing Trust.

Armory- Ms. Johnson noted that the legislation to move forward with the acquisition of the Armory has not been filed. She reiterated that once the legislation is filed there is a 90-day “shot clock” for the Town to take title of the property, and she noted that there are some outstanding issues that need to be addressed including the completion of a 21-E assessment and negotiating the extent and the applicability of restrictive historical covenants with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Mr. Randall gave an update on the Hudson Cultural Council’s fundraising activities.

Comprehensive Zoning Update- Ms. Johnson noted that the comprehensive zoning update is “ready to go” but hasn’t yet been brought to Town Meeting. She indicated that she would be consulting with the Zoning Steering Committee as to the appropriate timeframe to bring the update to Town Meeting in 2021. Ms. Johnson noted that this update is a recodification of the by-laws and does not include any changes to the use regulations in any of the zoning districts or overlay districts.

Update on private developments- Ms. Johnson noted that Global Montello Group Corporation has an application before the Planning Board for Site Plan Approval to construct a motor vehicle service station and convenience store located at 240 and 242 Washington Street. She noted a trend in the redevelopment of the traditional gas station convenience stores to more high-end mini supermarkets and coffee shops. It was noted that there a long, complicated history of the parcels and property owners involved.

- 4) **Open Forum/ Brainstorming for 2021 Guest Speakers and topics-** Ms. Johnson inquired if the Commission had any ideas on guest speakers and/or topics for future meetings. Members discussed having Intel as a guest speaker for the next meeting and suggested retail or other business trade organizations for future meetings.
- 5) Minutes from the September 23, 2020 meeting- Mr. Sullivan moved to approve the meeting minutes from the September 23, 2020 meeting. Seconded by Tom Ricci. Charles Randall noted a typo in the date listed in the footnote. 5-0-0. Unanimous
- 6) Adjournment- Bill Sullivan moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM. Seconded by Charles Randall. 5-0-0. Unanimous