

Town of Hampton



*Department of Resources and
Economic Development*



**Hampton Beach Area Commission
100 Winnacunnet Road
Hampton, New Hampshire 03842**

**Town Hall – Selectmen’s Meeting Room
Monthly Meeting –May 22, 2014
7:00 PM**

DRAFT MINUTES

In Attendance:

John Nyhan, Chairman, Town of Hampton
Fran McMahon, Rockingham Planning Commission
Bob Preston, Hampton Chamber of Commerce
Bill Watson, Vice Chairman-NH Department of Transportation
Michael Housman, Operations Supervisor, DRED (Seacoast
Parks/Recreation)
Rich Reniere, Hampton Beach Village District
Chuck Rage, Hampton Beach Village District

Excused: Mr. Merrill, Citizen at Large
Mr. Griffin, Hampton Representative

Absent:

Other: Anne Marchand, Secretary

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Introduction of Commissioners.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Related to Agenda Items. No Public Comment this evening.

APPOINTMENTS. There were no appointments this evening.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. McMahon to accept the Minutes of the April 24, 2014 Meeting as presented.

SECOND: Mr. Rage

VOTE: 7 in favor, 2 excused

MOTION PASSED

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:

1. Proposed Community-wide Seminar – Right To Know Law

Mr. Nyhan announced that the Right To Know Law Presentation will be held in the Selectmen’s Meeting Room, Town Hall, on Wednesday, May 28, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. The presentation is open to all public officials, as well as residents, who want to know more about this Law. Attorney Upton will be the presenter and a question and answer period will follow the presentation. Mr. Nyhan encouraged people to attend and announced that this will also be aired on Channel 22.

2. Summer Schedule/Special Meetings

Mr. Nyhan announced that this is the last regular meeting until September. If there is an immediate need to convene a meeting for a special activity or request, he will notify the members, as necessary.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Mr. Housman reported that the balance remains at \$19,765.75.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Preston to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented.

SECOND: Mr. Rage

VOTE: 7 In Favor, 2 excused

MOTION PASSED

TRANSPORTATION GRANT

1. Consultant Selection Update (Watson)

Mr. Watson reported that the VHB fees are well within those expected and are currently awaiting approval. A finalized and approved contract will move forward with the TCSP Grant. Meetings may be held during the summer. Rockingham Planning Commission is assisting in the efforts to gather information that will be helpful to VHB. This will then go to the Executive Council in June or July. The process to get information to the Council takes time and DOT has more work to complete.

2. Ten Year Transportation Plan Update (Watson)

Mr. Watson reported that the Plan has passed both the House and Senate, with less time being spent before the Senate. It has been approved and recommended and will be before a Committee Conference which has been called for discussion of minor differences between the House and Senate. These should be resolved in the next few weeks. All priorities for the Hampton area and Greater Seacoast are still in the time-frame.

OLD BUSINESS: No Old Business

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Master Plan Presentations.

Mr. Nyhan spoke to the review of five major areas of the 2002 Master Plan. Two reviews were held in April – Land Use and Infrastructure. This evening presentations will be on Environment, Economic, and Reevaluation Recommendations. The Transportation Section will involve all members of the HBAC and is a top priority for the September HBAC Meeting.

Environment and Open Space – Mr Merrill and Mr. Griffin

With the absence of Mr. Merrill and Mr. Griffin, Mr Nyhan read their report into the record as follows:

The areas reviewed of this section: Where we are today, What has been completed, and Forward Thinking. Their report is as follows:

In reviewing this section we find that the Town of Hampton and the State of New Hampshire have done a great deal of work within the Environment Section up to date. There have been many new EPA changes that have helped keep the area in its natural state. Some of the upgrades by the Town of Hampton are:

- Updating building changes to the public in the flood area;
- New water and septic systems installed at Hampton Beach;
- Upgrades at the HPW waste plant;
- Worked on drainage issues around the Main and North Beach Areas;
- Drains have been corrected in areas over the years;
- Upgrading of Church Street Pumping Station;
- The State of New Hampshire has done upgrades;
- Rebuilding the seawall at North Beach;
- Rebuilding of the Hampton Beach Visitor Center;
- Enforcement of the State Park with control of the sand and dunes;
- Upgrades to the beach sand areas each year;
- Upgrades to the State Marina area;
- Renting to the Blue Ocean at the Visitor Center to educate the public; and

Thinking Forward:

- As mentioned in the other presentation and looking at the entire Hampton coastline and working a solution to drainage in the Kings Highway area.
- Working with FEMA and the new flood maps and programs that are being proposed for Hampton Beach

Economic – Mr. Watson and Mr. Preston

Mr. Preston stated that most important in Section 3 is “Short Term Strategies” which include the beach and visual cosmetics. He noted that these visuals are happening every day with clean-up and improvements. Page three looks at the zones along the whole beach where many things are happening. People are coming to the beach and noticing the changes. There are comments on the new buildings, new condominiums, the A Block and the Casino Building. He stated that the Casino’s new owner has met with the Town Manager and will meet with the HBAC in the future to discuss projects; and commented that he “will be here for a while”.

Mr Preston noted that the front of the Boardwalk building is done and the Sea Catch continues to make improvements, among other ongoing projects. He stated it is remarkable that it is not new people coming to the beach, but those who have been here all along. People are consolidating and investing which is good for the future. He noted a number of projects including the Puritan and Hillcrest going together, the BeachView is redoing the front, and people are investing in the Happy Clam which has been closed for a number of years. He further commented on Bernie’s as well as the back streets including the new Fire Station, Precinct Building. Money, he said, is being reinvested into the community by people who have been here.

Further, zoning is a work in progress; heights are a good thing in that it will help people come in and make bigger and better places to attract different clientele; midterm strategies to the State Park to change drainage; and the beautiful Harbor area.

Mr. Preston also spoke of the crossways across Ocean Boulevard and suggested a sidewalk to the Harbor would help put good things together, as well as improve the south end of the beach.

Section 4 includes having a vision. If people cannot work together it is hard to have a vision. He also spoke to the off-peak season events such as the Sand Sculptures, etc., which give additional visibility to the beach through TV and newspapers. Mr. Preston also spoke to problems connected to some events and stated that different groups should come up with a better way to communicate. There are many pieces to the puzzle and people should be guided to talk with the Boards in Hampton as well as DRED, DOT, and the State. HBAC should be a part of this and, if groups continue to communicate and push things along, this will make the Master Plan Work.

He concluded saying that there needs to be discussion about the water issues on Ocean Boulevard as many people are making investments; and also, the people uptown should be shown how much revenue comes off the beach. Also, there are some inconveniences with the races, but they are needed to make the beach look better.

Mr. Watson stated that as reviewing the talk about different events, when the Master Plan was done, there was information on how much people spend and when people stay here they stay for longer period of time than anywhere else in the State of NH. Once people are drawn here, they stay. Also, with upgrades, types of events and attractions, not only during the season but beyond, the season could be more than 3-4 months per year.

Mr. Watson spoke to transportation in general stating that transportation and economy go hand in hand. Many local people state there are no parking issues; and, that a downside is that people do not know how to go to get to the beach. Connections should be made for people coming in with signage, notification, etc. He spoke to transit

connections, the State Park parking area, and traffic circulation. Continued efforts on this matter will help the economy, noting that there are bottlenecks with the bridge, 101, and I95, and if people cannot get in and out of the beach area, they will not be coming back. Improvements are getting closer.

Mr. MacMahon noted the improvements south of Ashworth Avenue with the “green project”, Fuller Acres, Peter Ross’ project on the corner of Winnacunnet, and other improvements which are happening throughout the beach. This is a good thing, he stated.

Recommended for Reevaluation – Mr. Reniere and Mr. Rage

Mr. Rage reported that in September, he and Mr Reniere will present a plan for recommendations that will be prioritized and acted on over the following 9 months. He also stated there will be coordination with Commissioner Watson in utilizing DOT technology that will provide an objective criteria for the Commission to establish the priority list.

Key areas are as follow:

- More cooperation between State, Town, Village District, and business community;
- Encourage more hotels and improvement of older hotels;
- Meeting with property owners to suggest visual improvements to their signage with the goal of uniformity;
- Attracting more diversified retail establishments to offer a wider selection to the public;
- Support more parking, possibly a garage;
- Establish a trolley and bus system offering off- site parking that will enable shuttling people to and from the beach;
- Better signage for entering and exiting the beach, utilizing Brown Ave and Rt 101;
- Improving sidewalks.

Mr. Reniere stated there was a meeting with property owners and survey of retail shops. He noted that Hampton is not Newburyport or Portsmouth and there are no buildings or infrastructure to provide venues for the types of retail one sees in those cities. Foot traffic visitors in Newburyport or Portsmouth are not in flip-flops and bathing suits. He noted people come to Hampton for the beach.

He also noted there is a broad census of what is available at the beach. There are 118 venues to provide people with what they want. It is time to look at what other types of retail can be provided. Some shops have closed. There are T-shirt shops that also provide beach goods. It comes down to what people are looking for and want available.

Mr. Reniere provided photographs taken a few years ago to show the Commission, noting one particular section that has signage uniformity, color coordination, and is attractive. People, he said, want to come to Hampton to remember the old-type boardwalk experience. Perhaps the flavor should not be changed, but there is a need for signage uniformity.

Mr. Reniere stated that he and Mr. Rage will closely look at key areas during the summer. Mr. Reniere provided the Commission with a “windshield survey” of existing retail businesses along Ocean Boulevard and Ashworth Avenue. Categories, he said, are very general in their definition since many provide an assortment of merchandise and service. He provided the following numbers:

13 Fast Food (Take out)

10 Jewelry
6 T-Shirt/Beachwear
6 Beach accessories
16 Dining (sit down)
8 Pizza shops
7 Ice Cream Shops
4 Women's Apparel
2 Candy Shops
2 Tattoo Parlors
23 Miscellaneous
16 Convenience Stores
3 Arcades
2 Gift Shops

He also reported there are 11 businesses on 3 lots between A & B Streets on Ocean Boulevard; 11 businesses on 4 lots between C & D Streets on Ocean Boulevard; and, 5 businesses on 3 lots between L & M Streets on Ocean Boulevard.

Mr. Rage stated that Hampton Beach is "Americana".

He also stated that parking is an issue to some people, but not others. There are some people who look for parking that is close to the beach, or is what they can afford. With all the people working at the beach there is often not enough parking for the tourists. Part of a solution would be to have employees park off the beach and shuttle them in. Also, getting people in and out of the beach with better signage would be a big improvement. Signage, he stated, is key and would not cost a lot.

Mr. Rage also noted that sidewalks are a disaster and some businesses are doing their own sidewalks, so there is no match. It would be nice to see uniform sidewalks.

Mr. Preston noted that, while looking at the photographs provided, the issue of signs has been addressed and with 11 businesses on one block it is difficult to be uniform and some look untidy. He stated that one should look at the new construction with Bernie's and Sea Spray with nice and uniform signs. With the newly constructed businesses, owners are addressing the sign issues. This, he said, may take care of itself in time. Things are changing and business owners have to sell the things the masses want.

Mr. Nyhan commented on the new technology for selecting criteria that was introduced by Mr. Watson. He said it would be good, in September, to use this tool to establish a criteria to prioritize the reachable goals and tasks during the nine months to follow. He further stated that there should be a priority on which recommendations can be implemented and go forward with the priorities within the categories. This would follow through on the Charter in terms of the Master Plan, which determined what has happened and what will be happening.

Mr. Watson reported, with regards to the sidewalks, that there is a new Federal Legislation/Program called the Transportation Alternative Program which deals with trails and sidewalks. He recommended the Town and School Districts apply for funds for the sidewalks and bike-trail related projects. Projects will be awarded by December 2014, with designs in the Spring of 2015. He stated that no State agencies or entities and non-profits may not apply. The Town of Hampton or the Village Precinct could apply. It would be helpful to find funding with a match from other sources. And, further, maintenance of sidewalks comes under the responsibility of the local community; i.e. plowing sidewalks.

Mr. Watson also stated that if Federal highway funds are used, it would be a community responsibility to maintain the sidewalks as well as winter maintenance. Summer and winter maintenance is required for ADA compliance.

There was discussion on, if the Town is willing to submit an application to build sidewalks, a case could be made that if east sidewalks are being plowed (vs. the west sidewalks) would it be required that both be plowed as long as ADA people can reach one sidewalk.

Mr. Rage noted that it is a Town Ordinance that, if one owns a building, sidewalks in front of the businesses shall be cleaned by the owner.

2. Other New Business

Mr. Nyhan announced that the next regular meeting of the HBAC will be held on Thursday, September 25, 2014. Special meetings will be called as necessary. He also thanked Channel 22 for their assistance these past months.

ADJOURN:

MOTION: Mr. Rage moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

SECOND: Mr. Renier

VOTE: 7 in Favor, 2 excused to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

MOTION PASSED

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Marchand, Secretary