

Town of Hampton



*Department of Resources and
Economic Development*



**Hampton Beach Area Commission
100 Winnacunnet Road
Hampton, New Hampshire 03842
Police Station Training Room
Monthly Meeting – April 21, 2016
7:00 PM**

MINUTES

In Attendance:

John Nyhan, Chairman, Town of Hampton Representative
Bill Watson, Vice Chairman-NH Department of Transportation
Fran McMahon, Rockingham Planning Commission
Rick Griffin, Town of Hampton Representative
Michael Housman, DRED Operations Supervisor
Bob Preston, Hampton Chamber of Commerce
Chuck Rage, Hampton Beach Village District
Robert Ladd, Hampton Beach Village District
Dean Merrill, At Large

Excused: 0

Absent: 0

Other: Jason Bachand, Town Planner
Anne Marchand, Secretary

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

This meeting was not recorded or televised due to lack of equipment in the Meeting Room.

Public Comments related to Agenda Items. None

Appointments. Regina Barnes – Hampton Board of Selectmen

Mr. Nyhan introduced the Commissioners to Ms. Barnes and provided a brief review of the HBAC's activities involving the Hampton Beach Master Plan, as well as the background of the formation of the Commission, which was established in 2003 as an oversight Commission. He commented that each Commissioner represents a segment of the community including Chamber of Commerce, DRED, DOT, Rockingham Planning Council, Board of Selectmen, Hampton Beach Village District and an At Large Commissioner. He also noted that Jason Bachand, Town Planner attends each meeting. The nine Commissioners have staggered assignments and many are long-term members. The HBAC advises and consults with local and state government on matters of Hampton Beach and the

Master Plan. The Commission does not have a final vote or jurisdiction as it is charged with recommending and implementation through the Town and State agencies. The Commission does have authority to write grants, seek funds, and pay expenses.

Mr. Nyhan explained how the HBAC funds small projects, i.e. the pilot project for traffic control for the Police Department which received \$4000 for the project last summer. Also, administrative services are paid.

Mr. Nyhan spoke to the \$300,000 grant which was applied for and granted. This was assigned to DOT who administrates the project for the study, engineering, and reconstruction of Ocean Boulevard. This project was a recommendation in the 50-year Master Plan and is currently a major priority. There is now much discussion on the Bridge being placed in the NH 10-Year Transportation Plan. This is ten years out, but there is planning.

He briefly outlined the other projects which the Commission is looking toward; i.e. parking, Ashworth Avenue, and establishing what Ocean Boulevard would look like if the funds were available. The HBAC is playing the role of consultant and most of the decisions will be made by the Town, and some by State Parks or DOT, depending on the efforts. The Rockingham Planning Council and the Chamber of Commerce are also working to coordinate services and efforts.

Ms. Barnes then, on question of Mr. Nyhan, provided her thoughts on the beach. Ms. Barnes stated that parking is a huge issue and when all the Condos are full questioned how many more people will try to get in and out of the area and Boulevard. Also, it is difficult for employees of businesses on Ocean Boulevard to get to work and find parking. She did note that Ocean Boulevard looks great and has turned around from ten years ago, although still needs work. She commented on the aimless driving around and around and would prefer Ashworth were two way which would create less of incentive for the aimless drivers. She noted there are lots of accidents at the beach, especially late when people are leaving work and walking home. The Police do a great job, but she understands the State Police will not be around quite as much this summer.

Ms. Barnes asked for the thoughts of the Commissioners.

Mr. Ladd said he has been pleased at what has been done with the complex eco-system, but it is an incremental process. He noted that the Planning Board is looking at zoning changes at the beach. Further, he commented that the State side of the Boulevard is great, but the Town side is a disaster with flooding problems, and not being able to walk on the west sidewalks. These, he said are small, practical issues.

Ms. Barnes asked about the possibility of “skywalks”, although she knows they are expensive. People on the street, she said do not look for cars coming before crossing which creates a dangerous situation.

Mr. McMahon stated the reconstruction of Ocean Boulevard is essential in that the roadway crowns and water runs on to the west side. Major issues are what is to be done with drainage and looking to address the pedestrian problem. He noted on the west side there are more people than sidewalks. Looking at more sidewalk on the west side is essential and doable. He noted that zoning amendments in the past 5-6 years, amended Condo regulations from the North end of Ashworth to N Street not allowing condos, but rather retail on the lowest level. The density has been increased to F Street and there likely will be more development in the 3-4 blocks. A goal, he stated, is to extend the season, which is happening.

Mr. Watson spoke to his position at DOT, noting that he is responsible for \$80 million in block grant aid and that Hampton projects come out of his office. He deals with safe passage, sidewalks to schools, litigation, bridges, and the issues at Hampton Beach. He did comment that Newmarket was talking about a Skywalk which would cost @ \$1 million. They are no longer talking of the skywalks, but doing surface work. Mr. Watson said it is a struggle to get people to cross where there are crosswalks. Another issue is the battle with Towns on sidewalk maintenance and how to look at local infrastructure. However, today there are more constructive conversations. He also noted

he has involvement and conversations with the Governor's Council, Senate, and House. There are lots of ideas and projects to be addressed and the State and Town boards are working together. He can bring to the HBAC his experience working and dealing with communities and how to make pedestrians, vehicles, and local economy work together with everyone. It's time to coexist together.

Mr. Rage stated that sidewalks are not distinguished, and there are loading zone difficulties. Also, need to get Town, Village District, and State making efforts together. He doesn't care who shovels, just have to get it done. Further, with regard to parking and traffic, the beach area needs more parking and needs to get traffic to move conveniently and comfortably.

Mr. Housman commented that the State Parks is a good partner, invested, and attentive to what is going on with open communication. The Beach is #1 priority, keeping it raked and clean, keeping up with restrooms, trash, moving pedestrians safely, and parking. Mr. Housman stated that in the winter, DRED clears the sidewalks on the east side and helps where it can.

Ms. Barnes commented that the State Park staff does a great job.

Mr. Preston stated that the HBAC works together with the Planning Board, DOT, Chamber of Commerce, etc. He notes there was not always that communication, and this is the better way.

Ms. Barnes stated she is definitely in favor of open communications.

Mr. Merrill commented on focus groups, some people coming from the Town some from State, etc. He commented that residents in Town gathered together to make improvements to the South End of Ocean Boulevard with projects that came up and this became a conduit to get everyone together. There is a vested interest and some things may be pie in the sky, but traffic has to be addressed.

Mr. Nyhan stated that everyone is working well together and pointed out when people talk about local government and State, they do not define. There is a major distinction between the Governor, Legislators, and State Agencies. Time after time, the State Agencies come in and partner with Hampton. He pointed to the snow during 2015 and how DRED, DOT, and the Town came together in a cooperative effort. He cautioned when one hears that "the State" is this and that, make sure you understand that there are many aspects of the State and some should not be slapped for what happens in Concord.

Ms. Barnes said she sees people out and about, and that is good and that DRED is a part of the local atmosphere.

Mr. Nyhan further spoke to how the HBAC operates via an RSA that says the HBAC's job is to take a look at the 50-Year Master Plan and proceed to implement the recommendations made back in 2002. Further, everything being done and anticipated is in the plan including the Intermodal and Ocean Boulevard. With regard to the Intermodal, he will make recommendation that the HBAC support the Intermodal with an amendment to eliminate the C and J concept. Offsite parking is needed for the beach and a site where a trolley system can be created. The Master Plan says "needs off-site parking". That is one thing before the Commission, and the second is Ocean Boulevard which is recognized to be within the 10 Year Plan. He explained how funding was received for engineering and design plans, and how now there is \$6 million to dedicate to reconstruction of Ocean Boulevard. If the Town and State DOT cannot come to agreement, the \$6 million will be lost and no Federal agency under USDOT will fund this community without that agreement on one issue – sidewalks. The main focus should be on what is best for the community and how to we make it safer than it is today.

Ms. Barnes asked about busses vs trolleys as well as using school parking lots, which, as explained, is a liability issue. She also asked about the Seabrook Dog Track, something which exists, as a parking solution. She questioned why we have to wait.

Mr. Preston said Hampton should move forward to see what can be done. Mr. Watson said that studies have to be supported by Towns, including surrounding Towns, and an analysis has to be done as well as input as to what is happening today. He also noted that what we now have locally may be able to be used on an interim basis.

Mr. McMahon said some sites have difficulty with regard to getting to them. If use WHS, have to get four Towns to agree and deal with impact on neighbors when getting from WHS to the beach. The Dog Track, he said, would not make sense in that people are coming from 95 to 101 to get to the beach. The beauty of the interchange is that there is one way off and one on.

Approval of March 31, 2016 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the March 31, 2016 Minutes as presented. **MOTION PASSED**

Chairman's Report.

1. Update on Transportation Grant and In-Kind Financial Report.

Mr. Nyhan suggested that Mr. Rose be present or send a report for the meeting in May as that is the last meeting until September. Mr. Nyhan would like to have an update and will put questions together. Some components of the plan need to be addressed and it is important to have good answers and how we close out 2016. He also stated that Senator Stiles is working behind the scenes and is working on an amendment to present to the Senate to move the engineering planning money of \$1 million forward to 2019. This is a good sign and he is hopeful it will pass. The Senate transportation meeting is 4/26/16.

Mr. Nyhan provided copies of the In-Kind Financial Report and stated that for the period from January to March, 2016 the total amount in-kind is \$2,718.44.

MOTION: Mr. McMahon moved, Mr. Merrill seconded to accept the In-Kind Financial Report as submitted.

VOTE: 8 in favor, 1 not in attendance (Mr. Griffin).

MOTION PASSED

2. Planning Board Meeting Update.

Mr. Nyhan stated he was invited to speak in front of the Planning Board, giving an update on HBAC activities and recommendations. He noted it was a good meeting; however there was some confusion with regard to communication between the HBAC and the Planning Board which dealt, for the most part, with the role of the HBAC as an Advisory Board. The HBAC can recommend but cannot implement. Further, as long as the HBAC is fulfilling the recommendations of the Master Plan, nothing should have to change. If the HBAC came up with something totally new and different, the role would then have to be modified. He noted that the HBAC stays in focus with making recommendations and can do this without requiring a lot of legal steps. He requested that Town Planner, Mr. Bachand, take a few minutes at the Planning Board meetings to update the members on HBAC activities.

Mr. McMahon commented that the Planning Board was making sure their turf was not impinged upon and there was general agreement that the Planning Board be kept informed. While looking at alternatives it is important to keep the Planning Board comfortable with what the HBAC is doing.

3. Upcoming Hampton BOS Meeting.

Mr. Nyhan stated that the presentation to the BOS will be that of an Annual Report and the issue of sidewalks. He stated it is important that the BOS accept that fact that if the Town can get Federal/State funding, it would be under

the condition the Town accept maintenance of the sidewalks. He would like support of the Town. This meeting will be held in May and Commissioners will be notified of the date.

Mr. Griffin joined the meeting.

Treasurer's Report. Mr. Housman reported there is currently a balance of \$11,351.43. A check for \$488 was sent to the Town of Hampton for secretarial services.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Preston, seconded by Mr. Watson to approve the Treasurer's Report as submitted.

VOTE: 9 in favor, 0 opposed

MOTION PASSED

Old Business:

1. Intermodal Center Update.

Mr. Nyhan reported that on May 2nd, the Board of Selectmen will take a vote on the Intermodal/Interchange Project. He stated that everyone is in favor of the interchange, but there is opposition to the Intermodal. Discussing this, Mr. Nyhan would like to recommend a final comment period, keeping the Intermodal concept concerning the Interchange while continuing to look for other locations for the C and J component.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Nyhan and Seconded by Mr. McMahan to request the Town of Hampton's Board of Selectmen continue to support the Interchange/Intermodal Project, as amended, eliminating the C and J Bus Line component and focus on the remote parking component.

Discussion and Comments on the Motion:

Mr. Ladd said there is are safety issues involved and the Town should go forward.

Mr. Griffin commented that the project is not going to go forward from what he has seen. There is a need to keep saying that this is in the future and keep the options open. People will try to defeat the project; however it is a part of the Master Plan.

Mr. Rage suggested a seasonal trolley back and forth to the beach.

Mr. Preston said a parking lot close to Winnacunnet High School is a win-win situation and there are many reasons to have the parking.

Mr. Griffin noted that because of development people have the impression there is not much parking

Mr Preston said that parking became available when buildings burned down.

Mr. Griffin commented that the first thing one sees is the parking space in the middle of the marsh.

Mr. Nyhan commented that if people looked at the site proposed for the Intermodal, anything would be better than what it looks like today.

Mr. Watson recommended the Town not take anything off the table and close the door. Inner city transit has a role in this location.

Mr. Preston said the Town should go forward because of the safety issues.

Mr. Griffin stated that someone called the Intermodal a "bus station" and that was a deadly blow that is stuck to the situation.

Mr. Merrill commented that the Town should not take this off the table, noting that Pease gravitated to larger, ever changing expectations.

Mr. Nyhan said that there needs to be compromise or it may be that the Board of Selectmen will scrap the Intermodal completely and just keep the intersection component.

Mr. Preston noted that Pease & Newburyport are right off I95 and the bus companies would prefer land closer to the highway.

Mr. Griffin recommended that every member of the Board of Selectmen should be contacted to explain the situation and also questioned whether someone from the Planning Board should speak to the Intermodal Plan.

VOTE on the Main Motion: 8 In Favor, 1 Abstain (Mr. Watson) MOTION PASSED

2. Other Old Business:

Mr. Rage questioned if people could stay later in the State Park lot. He stated he is thinking of staff of the businesses at the beach. He noted that residents are putting cars on the street so people cannot park there. Mr. Housman commented that there would have to be a way for people to get out of the lot after 8:00. However, Mr. Housman stated the lot will be open until 10:30 pm on “firework nights”. There may also be the option to lease space.

New Business:

1. State Park Spring Meeting (Mr. Housman)

Mr. Housman reported that the Spring Meeting will be held from 5 – 6:30 pm on THURSDAY, May 19th at the Seashell. He reported that pay stations will be up and running during the week of April 25th. Also, the Project at South Beach, currently being done, is for drainage improvements.

2. May Meeting. Mr. Nyhan stated that the HBAC will not meet during the summer unless an emergency issue arises. The May 19th meeting (following the State Park Spring Meeting) will be held at the Beach Fire Station at 7:00 pm. He requests the Commissioners to forward any Agenda Items to him prior to that meeting.

Mr. Watson suggested inviting Senator Stiles to the May meeting to hear any updates.

3. Other New Business.

Mr. Griffin asked that people remember that the Intermodal project is part of the 10-Year Transportation Plan.

Mr. Preston encouraged residents to do back-yard clean ups now that Spring is here and summer is approaching in that, once the nice weather comes in, there are different perspectives of back yard neighborhoods, especially from upper floors of buildings.

ADJOURNMENT: It was moved by Mr. Ladd, seconded by Mr. Housman to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 pm.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

MOTION PASSED

MAY MEETING – The May Meeting will be held on May 19, 2016 at the Beach Fire Station Meeting Room at 7:00 pm. Please remember the State Park Spring Meeting will be held prior to the HBAC meeting.

**Respectfully submitted,
Anne Marchand, Secretary**