



Ribbon-Cutting and Dedication of Mansfield Town Square

Friday, May 29 at 6:00 PM

Musical performance by Oh, Cassius! to follow

May 11, 2015 – The Mansfield Downtown Partnership invites the community to celebrate the recent completion of Mansfield’s Town Square at a ribbon-cutting and dedication on Friday, May 29 at 6:00 pm. Following the ceremony, residents and visitors will enjoy a musical performance by Oh, Cassius! This event is free and open to the public.



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When the Town of Mansfield began planning for the development of Storrs Center in the late 1990s, one of the first things residents requested was a central gathering space for the community. This request helped guide the plans for the downtown as they evolved over the years. In fact, the 2002 Downtown Mansfield Master Plan by The Milone & MacBroom Team in conjunction with the Miniutti Group, Harrall-Michalowski Associates, Johnson Land Design, and Dr. Norman Garrick supported this need by calling for a central civic space that would “foster public events.”

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership and Storrs Center master developer LeylandAlliance continued to keep this key need in the forefront as the plans moved from concept to design. The Municipal Development Plan for Storrs Center detailed more specific goals for a town square that would “. . . have the character of a public outdoor room [and would] be a focus for the life of the community. People will want to go there, shop, work, meet, talk, and live. . . [The] square will be a key component of the public realm and a center of civic activity.” The Municipal Development Plan was completed in 2005 and approved unanimously by the Partnership Board of Directors, the Windham Region Council of Governments Regional Planning Commission, Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission, Mansfield Town Council, and UConn Board of Trustees.

With these approvals in hand, the Partnership and LeylandAlliance embarked on creating the Storrs Center: Special Design District Design Guidelines, which now serve as the zoning regulations for the downtown district. These guidelines more clearly defined the shape and size of the Town Square, with details on sidewalk widths, suitable landscaping elements, and appropriate types of street furniture. In 2007, following a public hearing, the Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously approved the SC: SDD Design Guidelines and incorporated them into the Town’s zoning regulations.

The last step in the planning process was conducted by the Mansfield Downtown Partnership over the course of the past two years. The Partnership selected landscape architecture firm Kent + Frost from Mystic, Connecticut, through an RFP process to serve as the lead designer for the Town Square. Then, the Partnership reached out to groups of community stakeholders, including the Town’s Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development, Police, Youth Services, and Senior Services Departments; the Town’s Committee on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities; the Town Council; the Planning and Zoning Commission; the Garden Gate Club; Mansfield Advocates for Children; Storrs Farmers Market;

E. O. Smith High School; downtown business owners; faculty and staff from UConn's Landscape Architecture program and School of Fine Arts; the Partnership's Board of Directors, Advertising and Promotion Committee, and Planning and Design Committee; and LeylandAlliance. The Partnership received input initially on the general wishes from the stakeholders for this shared community space and then received feedback on the design from Kent + Frost as it progressed.

On September 17, 2013, the Partnership held a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed design by Kent + Frost. Following the hearing, the Town's Director of Planning and Development granted the zoning permit for the Town Square. As part of the Director's review of the application, the plans were submitted for review and comment to the following Town departments and committees: Public Works/Engineering; Committee on Needs of Persons with Disabilities; Fire Marshal; Traffic Authority; Recreation Advisory Committee; Open Space Preservation Committee; and the Parks Advisory Committee.

With the well-vetted plans in hand, the Partnership oversaw construction through the fall of 2013 and early spring of 2014. The Town Square opened for public use in May 2013, although the design was not yet fully realized. With the installation of the Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation Pavilion roof; *Weaving Shuttle*, a sculpture by Connecticut artist David Boyajian; trellises; and lighting this spring, the Town Square is now complete!

The Partnership thanks the many community members who contributed to the design and realization of this important community space. In particular, the Partnership wishes to recognize the major donors who made the construction of the Town Square possible:

Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation
CVS Health
Town of Mansfield
UConn
LeylandAlliance
EdR
State of Connecticut
Janina & Nancy Swiacki
Centerplan Companies
Charter Realty & Development Corporation
Milton C. Beebe & Sons
Stephen M. Bacon and Anne L. Bennett
Honey and Harry Birkenruth
Thomas Q. Callahan
The Philip & Christine Lodewick Foundation
and the Schwab Family.

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership invites Mansfield residents, neighbors, and friends to celebrate the completion of this significant civic project on Friday, May 29. The ribbon-cutting and dedication of the Town Square will begin at 6:00 pm. Following the official ceremony, there will be a performance by Oh, Cassius! This event is free and open to the public. The Partnership looks forward to celebrating with the community at this event, and at many future community events to come!

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization created by the Town of Mansfield and the University of Connecticut in 2001. The Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. seeks to foster the continued development and management of Storrs Center - a vibrant and economically successful mixed-use downtown at the heart of our community. The Partnership will actively assist with the future community and economic development of Four Corners, King Hill Road, and other areas identified by the Town of Mansfield and the University of Connecticut.

For more information about the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, please visit www.mansfieldct.org/mdp.