

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
Tuesday, May 2, 2006**

MINUTES

Present: Stephen Bacon, Tom Callahan, Bruce Clouette, Mike Gergler, Al Hawkins, Janet Jones, Peter Nicholls, Betsy Paterson, Dave Pepin, Steve Rogers, Betsy Treiber, Frank Vasington

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Tricia Rogalski, Lee Cole-Chu

Guests: Tom Cody, Geoff Fitzgerald

1. Call to Order

Betsy Treiber, Vice President, called the meeting to order in Philip Lodewick's absence at 4:00 pm.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

Bruce Clouette made a motion to approve the minutes. Mike Gergler seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Director's Report

Cynthia van Zelm said that work was being completed by the Town and BL Companies on the downtown connector that would connect the downtown to the Town Hall and the Community Center. The plan was to go out for bid on the pedestrian walkway soon.

Ms. van Zelm said there would be another follow-up meeting with the Department of Economic and Community Development tomorrow to further discuss the Urban Action Grant.

She also encouraged more letters of support to Congressman Simmons and Senators Lieberman and Dodd from the Board and the community with respect to funding for the parking garage.

Ms. van Zelm said the third open house is scheduled for Thursday, May 4 at 5:30 pm and that the turnout had been very good thus far.

Ms. van Zelm said that outreach continues and that she would be appearing with the UConn engineering students who put together a model for a parking garage on May 3 at 7 am on the Wayne Norman Show. She and Macon Toledano will also be speaking to the CT Green Building Council in June about the efforts to create a development that follows sustainability principles.

4. Recommendation to appoint Karin Randolph to the Planning and Design Committee

Betsy Paterson made a motion to appoint Karin Randolph to the Planning and Design Committee. Mr. Clouette seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Overview of DRAFT Design Guidelines (Parts 1 and 2) and Review of Proposal for Planning and Design Committee Oversight of Design of Storrs Center

Planning and Design Committee Chair Steve Bacon said there are three Board members on the Planning and Design Committee – himself, Ms. Paterson, and David Pepin and nine other Mansfield residents. Their charge as laid out in September 2001 is to maintain an attractive coordinated image of downtown. Mr. Bacon read the Committee's full charge.

In September 2002, the Committee began talking about design values for the new downtown. He believes the Board reviewed and adopted those design values. The Committee also started to talk about the buildings being "green." The Partnership's consultant Looney Ricks Kiss and Macon Toledano from LeylandAlliance began to get very involved in the process. Many hours have been devoted to this process by Committee members and he commended them for their work.

Mr. Bacon said the Committee is now ready to present to the Board the draft design guidelines. Part One is the nuts and bolts of design and much of this will be proposed to be included as part of the new zoning regulations that will be adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission. These guidelines include aesthetic standards. Mr. Bacon said the Committee is not asking for an endorsement of the guidelines as they will not be complete until the Planning and Zoning Commission acts on the zoning regulations (he anticipates comments and revisions by the Commission) but the goal is to bring the Board up to speed on the work that has been done.

Mr. Bacon referred to some sections in the guidelines. He noted Section 4.1.2 on page 28, which deals with building height. The downtown will have different districts with various heights. Height limitations will be subject to the Planning and Zoning Commission's authority and jurisdiction. The Committee's proposal included in the guidelines is not necessarily what the Commission will approve.

Mr. Bacon then referred to page 29 of Part One design guidelines, which looks at material types. This is an area that may not be regulated by the Commission but would be overseen by the Planning and Design Committee.

Mr. Bacon said that in December of 2002, the Committee started to talk about LEED certification for buildings in the project as a way to encourage that the buildings be environmentally friendly. Initially the Committee considered recommending that the developer try to achieve LEED certification but learned that it may not be appropriate for mixed-use buildings (there is currently a large effort being made to establish LEED certification for mixed-use buildings but it is not complete). LEED certification is currently best applied to single and larger buildings. But the need and desire for sustainability guidelines was still strong and Mr. Toledano began working with Steven Winter on these guidelines. The sustainability guidelines largely are outside the jurisdiction of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Clouette asked who Steve Winter is. Mr. Bacon said that Steven Winter is an original member of the Green Building Council that developed the LEED standards. Mr. Winter owns his own consulting firm that works on sustainability issues.

Mr. Bacon said he believes that the community will be cutting edge with adoption of sustainability guidelines, which are not part of mainstream construction. These guidelines could make the project stand out nationally.

Ms. van Zelm referred to her memo to the Board in their packet, noting that the Planning and Design Committee is recommending to the Board that they review the design guidelines with the knowledge that they could change based on what Mr. Bacon had relayed. Ms. van Zelm and the Committee felt it was important to bring the Board up to speed on the work the Committee has done on the guidelines. The design guidelines will be high profile and it will be important for the Board and the Committee to communicate to the community about their substance.

Mr. Clouette asked again about having some type of public session on the design guidelines. Mr. Bacon said the Committee had discussed this and has suggested a public forum on the guidelines in the form of a public information session vs. a public hearing. Mr. Bacon said the timing of this is still being discussed but the latest thinking was that the community could see the guidelines and comment on them before the Planning and Zoning Commission holds a public hearing on the proposed zoning regulation changes (that would include pieces of the design guidelines). Mr. Bacon said it might make sense to have two different sessions on Parts One and Two of the guidelines to make sure there is enough time to give justice to both.

Mr. Bacon then asked the Board to consider the proposed motion which gives the Planning and Design Committee the authority to monitor that the design guidelines (not covered by the Commission) are being followed by the

development team. Mr. Bacon said there had been some discussion of having professional architects certify that the design guidelines are being followed. The Committee determined that even though they are not construction experts, they can review the plans for the development vis a vis the guidelines. The responsibility, through certification, must be on the developer that they are following the guidelines. The architect for a particular building(s) would certify the guidelines are being followed through check-off lists which the Committee would then verify.

Ms. van Zelm said there would need to be an agreement between the Partnership and Leyland on the above process.

Ms. Paterson said the Planning and Design Committee came together as a group where there are a lot of diverse opinions. The guidelines will be a product the community will be proud of for Mansfield.

Mr. Clouette said both Parts One and Two of the guidelines are strong on substance and he congratulated Mr. Bacon, the Committee, and the development team for a tremendous product.

Mr. Clouette asked what is the force behind making sure the guidelines are followed? Is it continued cooperation between the Partnership and the development team? He would perceive that it would be in Leyland's best interest to follow the guidelines. Mr. Clouette raises the issue because he thinks it will be asked by the public. He believes this can be accomplished through the zoning process, the checklists, and cooperative efforts.

Ms. Paterson noted that when there were concerns, Leyland stepped up to the plate, i.e., with creation of the Building 1A to try to relocate some businesses. Lee Cole-Chu said another good example are the guidelines themselves. They go way beyond the minimal legal requirements.

Tom Cody said the development team appreciates the goodwill. He noted that the Partnership as the municipal development agent for Storrs Center, retains authority as the overseer of the Municipal Development Plan. The ultimate authority rests in the Partnership and this could be made clear in any public meetings.

Tom Callahan referred to Ms. van Zelm and Mr. Cole-Chu's memo on page 3 which notes that the procedure for certification would be detailed in a contract between the Partnership and LeylandAlliance. Mr. Cole-Chu agreed and noted that as a practical manner, if the Planning and Design Committee or the Board thought the process was not being followed, there would be discussions with LeylandAlliance.

Mr. Pepin noted that the Planning and Design Committee struggled with this issue of monitoring. He said the design guidelines have to be dynamic and also be able to be modified if necessary. Mr. Cody commended the Committee's work and agreed that the guidelines should be a living document that can be changed over time.

Frank Vasington asked if the Committee felt comfortable monitoring the guidelines without many professionals in the field on the Committee. Mr. Pepin said the Committee agreed to accept this responsibility with the idea that outside help would be brought in if needed. Mr. Bacon said the Committee also talked about a division of labor to review site plans and adherence with the guidelines.

Ms. Paterson made a motion to designate the Partnership's Planning and Design Committee to monitor the design and sustainability elements of the Storrs Center vision through the oversight of the Storrs Center Design Guidelines. Al Hawkins seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Update on Storrs Center Project and Next Steps including Application to Planning and Zoning Commission

Mr. Cody reiterated that the plan is to build a commercial building as the first step of Storrs Center to relocate some of the existing businesses. The Planning and Zoning Commission has a public hearing scheduled for 8 pm on June 5. The building will be approximately 12,000 square feet. It will not be able to accommodate all the businesses but should be able to house most of them.

Mr. Cody said the development team and Partnership staff consulted with Town Planning Director Greg Padick and it was agreed that the property would be rezoned from residential to Planned Business-2. There are three other aspects of the existing zoning that are proposed to be changed: Make provisions for an automotive repair use with controls; allow for a taller building; and include residential as part of the mixed-use building. If there is some space available, this allows for a residential use. It would never be more than half the building space.

Four applications have been submitted including a zone change, text amendment (the Partnership is co-applicant on these two applications), special permit for the building, and a subdivision.

Mr. Clouette asked if the changes described above would apply to other Planned Business-2 zones and Mr. Cody replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Vasington asked if any residential spaces would be sold before it is known which businesses will actually go into Building 1A. Mr. Cody said that the residential piece is being built in to allow for this opportunity down the road.

Mr. Bacon asked if any concerns are expected to be raised at the public hearing. Mr. Cody said that Ms. van Zelm, Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Toledano had met with the Willowbrook/Oak Hill/Dog Lane neighbors. There was generally a lot of support with some questions about traffic and parking.

Mr. Padick said the Planning and Zoning Commission had raised some issues of traffic impact at its meeting last night and will request additional information from the development team. Mr. Cody said they did not believe that the traffic impact would be large as these businesses are already here generating traffic. He said that analysis of this building and the other buildings for the project will be folded into an application to the State Traffic Commission. There will be an interim time when the building is up and the others have not been demolished. Mr. Cody said the team will work on responding to the Commission's concerns when they receive more feedback from them.

Janet Jones asked what the long term plan is for Building 1A. Mr. Cody said it will be a permanent building and will be designed to fit in with the rest of the project and the neighborhood.

Mr. Fitzgerald provided an overview of the building. He said access will be provided through the Bishop Center road with access to the automotive repair bays through a center courtyard. There will be 5 spaces in the courtyard for the automotive repair shop and 42 spaces to customers and employees on the east side of the building in a new parking lot. They did tighten up the parking and placed landscaping on the perimeter to try to pull the lot as far away from the neighborhood as possible.

He said that they will use best management practices for the stormwater management.

Mr. Fitzgerald showed the dimensions of the building and notes that architect Patrick Pinnell and Mr. Toledano had worked on the design. The scale was designed to not be too large, and to fit in with the neighborhood.

Mr. Clouette said the implication is that Dog Lane will not be seriously disrupted if the building is for relocated businesses. Mr. Fitzgerald said that Dog Lane will not be closed for a significant time. Mr. Cody said that Dog Lane will need to be accessible.

Mr. Cody said the building will be about 55 feet tall to accommodate the parapet.

Mr. Fitzgerald said there will be stairs and an elevator to the 2nd and 3rd floors.

Mr. Fitzgerald said the idea is to create excitement on the street level. The design will be of quality as well as the materials used.

Mr. Clouette said the design shows an improvement over what many of the businesses have now including an elevator and three bays for the automotive repair shop.

Mr. Cody said the walls are being designed to try to be flexible about space. He thought that about 8 to 12 businesses could fit in the building. The footprint is 6,200 square feet.

Mr. Bacon asked if there were design challenges to put an automotive repair shop in a retail environment. Geoff said that there are and that is why it is on the 1st floor. There will have to be provisions with respect to noise and the surrounding spaces.

Mr. Cody said the Municipal Development Plan boundary incorporates the new building but not the parking lot. The Dept. of Economic and Community Development asked if the additional space for 1A is in addition to the overall estimate of commercial space and Mr. Cody told them it is incorporated into the overall numbers.

Mr. Cody said he is hopeful the Commission will approve the four applications this summer with a goal for groundbreaking in early fall.

Mr. Callahan asked if the design guidelines apply since the Special Design District is not in place yet. Mr. Cody said they do not apply but that the spirit of the guidelines will be followed for Building 1A.

Mr. Callahan also asked what the response will be by the public with respect to the different renderings for Building 1A and the overall project. Mr. Cody said the idea for Building 1A is to keep it as affordable as possible for the current businesses. The building is also smaller than the other proposed buildings – masonry elements may not fit in with what is being proposed for the central core. Mr. Clouette said the objective through the design guidelines is to create diversity with building style and that idea can be conveyed to the public.

7. Report from Committees

Festival on the Green

Ms. Paterson said the little Big Band, and the Mohegan Sun All Stars are committed to play at the Festival. There will be one stage this year and a dance floor in front of the stage. She will also be doing a duet with Bruce John of Kidsville Kuckoo Revue.

The Lion's Club will do hamburgers. There will be a pie eating contest as well as a pie baking contest this year.

Ms. Paterson said the Committee is still looking for sponsors which will be recognized. There is a special opportunity to sponsor the winners at the art exhibition.

Finance and Administration

Mr. Callahan said the Finance and Administration Committee met last week and discussed additional hours for Administrative Assistant Tricia Rogalski. Ms. van Zelm indicated that she had enough work for Ms. Rogalski to do to bring her up to three-quarters time. The Committee is recommending adding \$10,000 to the staffing budget line to cover the additional time. Ms. Rogalski does not need benefits and her increased time does not trigger a requirement for benefits. Mr. Callahan made a motion to add \$10,000 to the Partnership budget for the position which will initially be covered out of reserves. A meeting will be scheduled with himself, Martin Berliner, Ms. Treiber, and Ms. Paterson to further discuss finances. Ms. Paterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Steve Rogers asked Assistant Town Manager Matthew Hart if it was correct that no benefits are triggered with a person working three-quarters time. Mr. Hart said the only benefits required to be paid are Social Security and Medicare which are already being taken out of Ms. Rogalski's paycheck.

Membership Development

Ms. Treiber said the Committee has been meeting monthly and has been actively pursuing membership renewals and new members.

Ms. Treiber said a question came up at the last Committee meeting whether people who have expressed an interest in housing or are on the general interested parties list should be required to be members. Mr. Rogers said that LeylandAlliance will decide who moves into the housing. Mr. Cole-Chu said there has been some staff discussion about people joining for a dollar to dollar credit for purchase of a residence in the new development. Ms. van Zelm said she can send a letter with a membership form to people who have asked to be on the housing list. Mr. Callahan and Mr. Rogers did not think it was a good idea to require people on a housing list to become members.

Ms. Treiber said the Membership Development Committee can prepare a letter that would go to people who want to be on the housing list with information on membership, but with no requirement. Al Hawkins said the level of information sent out can be increased to help with membership.

Ms. Treiber said a Partnership table with membership information will be at the opening of the Little League and the Mansfield Bike Tour.

She said there were 327 members with over \$19,000 in dues as of this date.

8. Communications

Ms. van Zelm referenced the letter from the Arts Advisory Committee and said that she had met with the Committee twice over the years and can meet with them again about their interest in an artist presence in the downtown.

Ms. Jones suggested that one way to address this may be to have a hallway of art displayed similar to what is done at the Windham Hospital. This would increase their exposure.

9. Adjourn

Mr. Bacon made a motion to adjourn at 6:05 pm. Mr. Vasington seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting notes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.