

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP  
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE  
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office  
1244 Storrs Road**

**Tuesday, November 16, 2010**

**MINUTES**

Members: Steve Bacon, Karla Fox, Manny Haidous, Jon Hand, Chris Kueffner, Frank McNabb, Peter Millman, Ruth Moynihan, and Pene Williams

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm and Kathleen Paterson

Guests: Geoff Fitzgerald (BL Companies); Andy Graves (BL Companies); Howard Kaufman (LeylandAlliance); Lou Marquet (LeylandAlliance); Greg Padick (Town Director of Planning); Alexandria Roe (Partnership Board); Bob Sitkowski (UConn); Macon Toledano (LeylandAlliance); and Antoinette Webster (Partnership Board)

**1. Call to Order**

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

**2. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes from October 19, 2010**

Frank McNabb made a motion to approve the October 19, 2010 minutes. Peter Millman seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**4. Review of Preliminary Plans for Phases 1A and 1B**

Mr. Bacon introduced the members of the development team who would present on Phases 1A and 1B. He reviewed the process vis a vis the Committee's role and the need for a future recommendation to the Board of Directors. Mr. Bacon noted that the Committee may need to schedule a special meeting in the near future.

Macon Toledano presented the overall plan for Phase 1A, the parking garage, and Phase 1B. He said that between now and the spring, zoning permits and building permits for each building in the first two phases must be approved. Mr. Toledano explained that the development team will apply for Phases 1A and 1B as one big package to keep the process moving forward and that the second package will include the parking garage and Village

Street projects. He added that the projects in the second package are both Town projects and that designers for the parking garage and intermodal transportation center had just recently been brought on board. Mr. Toledano explained the anticipated sequence of construction, beginning with Phase 1A and the garage. He then explained the focus of the presentation would be looking at the buildings and how they relate to the vision and regulations as described in the Storrs Center Special Design District. He noted that the development team will continue to work on the plans following this meeting.

Ruth Moynihan asked about a reported application to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a zone change.

Mr. Toledano explained that the change applied for is to make the former DL-1 building consistent with the Storrs Center Special Design District (SC-SDD). He reviewed the history of the DL-1 building from the initial plan for it to be a building for relocating tenants to the decision that the building was not cost-effective to the current plan to incorporate DL-1 into DL-2. He said that, because DL-2 is part of the SC-SDD, the goal is to have DL-1 be consistent with the SC-SDD. Mr. Toledano explained that the change will allow the building height and composition of DL-1 to match the adjoining DL-2.

Geoff Fitzgerald presented an overall view of the civil aspects of Phases 1A and 1B. He reiterated that members of the development team are actively designing the buildings and so the presented plans are not yet final. Mr. Fitzgerald reviewed the plans for the UConn parking lots adjacent to Phases 1A and 1B and noted that they are independent of the SC-SDD. He said that the package that will be presented to the Town will include erosion control plans and other construction specifics. Mr. Fitzgerald then reviewed the proposed adjustments to DL-1 and the Dog Lane realignment plans. He pointed out the temporary road which will connect to the Bolton Road intersection during construction prior to the demolition of the Storrs Automotive building.

Jon Hand asked if the new building for Storrs Automotive as shown in Phase 1A would be a permanent building.

Mr. Fitzgerald answered that yes, the new Storrs Automotive building will be the permanent location. He then reviewed the streetscape plans to match the SC-SDD and noted parking and service locations behind DL-1/2.

Mr. Millman asked for clarification on UConn's parking situation in the adjacent lots.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that because some current parking lots would be included in the land used for Phase 1A, the development team will build and expand two new and current UConn lots in the area and relocate the basketball and volleyball courts.

Alexandria Roe confirmed that the amount of parking currently offered would remain with the planned changes.

Manny Haidous asked if DL1/2 would be a double-sided building.

Andy Graves explained that TS-1 (located at the corner of Storrs Road and Dog Lane) would have front to back retail on the first floor with the entrances at the front of the building and

services at the back. He then explained that DL-1/2 would have retail entrances at both the front and back of the building because it will include tenants that required smaller spaces.

Antoinette Webster inquired about a driveway cut shown to the north of TS-1.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that that the driveway cut is an existing service entrance to Buckley Hall dormitory and will remain but will not be labeled as an entrance to the project.

There was some discussion about the likelihood of people using that entrance as a shortcut through the project. The general consensus was that, while this is a probability, the service access for Buckley and TS-1 and DL-1/2 was necessary.

Frank McNabb expressed concern with the amount of traffic on Dog Lane and pedestrian safety. He asked whether the speed bumps which are currently on Dog Lane could be continued farther west.

Mr. Fitzgerald commented on the streetscape plans for Dog Lane and referred to the Master Plan for efforts to ensure pedestrian safety.

Lou Marquet added that the siting of the larger buildings closer to the road, the on-street parking, and other visual cues have been shown to be more effective methods of traffic calming than speed bumps.

Mr. Fitzgerald added that speed bumps could be installed at a later date if, once the project was finished, it was determined that such a change was needed.

Mr. Toledano reminded the Committee that Dog Lane will no longer have a lighted intersection at Storrs Road and noted that the emphasis for through traffic will be the lighted Bolton Road intersection. He said the intent is for Dog Lane to be more of a local road.

Mr. Fitzgerald told the Committee that, from a suggestion at the previous meeting, they will add a pedestrian crosswalk near the parking garage. He added that the plan is to have a raised pedestrian crosswalk at the connection point with the Daily Campus (between TS-1 and DL-1/2).

Mr. Millman asked whether Dog Lane would be connected to Storrs Road through the construction time period.

Mr. Fitzgerald answered that Dog Lane will have access through and following construction. He reviewed the road plans and noted that, at times, Dog Lane may need to be only one lane to accommodate construction.

Pene Williams asked about the proposed Dog Lane traffic pattern.

Mr. Fitzgerald reviewed the plans for Dog Lane to continue to have access to Storrs Road. He said that traffic leaving Dog Lane onto Storrs Road will be restricted to north-bound (right turns) only and that traffic entering Dog Lane may come from either north- or south-bound lanes on Storrs Road.

Ms. Williams expressed concern regarding the lack of a south-bound (left turn) option from Dog Lane to Storrs Road.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained that motorists wishing to head south-bound from Dog Lane would be directed around the Town Square to the lighted intersection at Bolton Road.

Kathleen Paterson commented on the current traffic flow problems between the Bolton Road – Storrs Road – Dog Lane intersections and that the new pattern would be a safer option for motorists and pedestrians.

Mr. Marquet explained that the new pattern meets requirements from the Connecticut DOT.

Mr. Fitzgerald added that once the full project is complete, there will be multiple means of accessing the project and Storrs Road.

Ms. Moynihan inquired about the status of the Thai restaurant and expressed her concern that it remain in the area. She commented that it is a very good restaurant, and she is very much in support of keeping it there.

Mr. Toledano replied that LeylandAlliance continues to work with the owners of the Thai restaurant to find a suitable solution for both parties. He added that an agreement had been reached with Select Physical Therapy, which will temporarily move into the former Phil's building until space in the new building is ready.

Mr. Graves reviewed the plans for TS-1 and reiterated that the first floor retail will be front to back with entrances at the front and service access at the back. He noted that the mechanical elements will be on the roof.

Mr. McNabb asked whether the sidewalk was stepped.

Mr. Graves said that the sidewalk slopes by TS-1 but that there are steps in addition to a sloped sidewalk farther up on Dog Lane.

Mr. Marquet noted that the plans are ADA compliant in regards to slopes and widths.

Mr. Toledano referred to the design guidelines for sidewalk widths and noted that not only is activity on the sidewalks permitted, it is encouraged in the guidelines.

Mr. Haidous suggested that some of the retail uses or restaurants should have doors that fold open for access to sidewalk seating.

Mr. Graves explained that, because of budget concerns, there are currently no plans for such amenities. However, he noted that individual tenants may choose to incorporate such doors or similar options in which case they can add those in at their own expense.

Mr. Graves then reviewed the plans for a typical residential floor in TS-1. He noted that TS-1 will have one floor of commercial uses with four floors of residential uses above. He explained that the design follows both what is permitted in the SC-SDD design guidelines and

what is requested by the housing developer EDR. Mr. Graves noted that each building will have a mix of residential units.

Mr. Toledano explained the idea of creating a higher density closer to the Town Square as part of the plans to create an active, vibrant public space. He also noted that there will be a mix of residential unit sizes in each building. Mr. Toledano added that the residential units are open to anyone who would like to live there.

Mr. Graves reviewed the basic sizes of each type of unit: Studio – 450 sq ft; 1 bedroom – 550 sq ft; 2 bedroom – 600-700 sq ft; 3 bedroom – 1100 sq ft (all approximate).

Ms. Moynihan expressed her concern about the cost of additional bathrooms and that affordable housing is needed in town.

Mr. Millman said that, from his professional experience, there are families to whom a three bedroom, higher end rental unit would be appealing. He explained that he often has clients looking for similar options but that there are few currently in town.

Mr. McNabb asked for clarification on the balconies and whether the description of 18 inches was correct.

Mr. Toledano explained that the balconies are to accommodate full height windows to allow more natural light and fresh air into the units. He said the narrow design allows windows or French doors to open but prevents the balconies from being put to other uses.

Mr. Graves agreed and noted that these “Juliet” balconies are the only ones included in the plans. He then reviewed the elevation diagrams with the Committee. He noted three main focal points around the Town Square: the corner of Dog Lane and Storrs Road, the corner of Bolton Road and Village Street, and the façade of TS-2 that faces the Town Square.

Mr. Fitzgerald pointed out the entrances to the residential floors which are designed to be noticed as different from the retail without competing with other façade elements.

Ms. Webster asked if the façades will be staggered.

Mr. Graves answered yes, they will be. He then discussed the different materials that will be used for the façades.

Ms. Roe expressed concern regarding the use of fiber cement clapboards and questioned whether the type called for in the plans are prohibited in the design guidelines.

Mr. Toledano referenced the design guidelines and quoted the types of permitted materials, including fiber cement board.

Mr. Haidous asked if all the other buildings will be the same.

Mr. Graves explained that he will next review the plans for DL-1/2 and TS-2 but that no other buildings have been designed yet. He also noted that the design teams for subsequent buildings will be selected at a future time.

Mr. Bacon asked if the awnings depicted over the commercial units would be optional.

Mr. Graves said yes, the choice of whether or not to have an awning would be up to individual tenants and be limited to those approved in the SC-SDD design guidelines. He explained that the guidelines specify what types and sizes of awnings may be used as well as regulate signage and other decorative additions.

Ms. Moynihan questioned the use of vinyl windows and expressed concern as to their durability.

Mr. Graves explained that the windows selected are of a high quality product with a 0.3 rating or better. He acknowledged that the cost was a factor in choosing the type of window but noted that vinyl is permitted according to the design guidelines.

Mr. Marquet added that the goal is to maintain consistency throughout the project and that the cost of wood windows can be as much as 50% more than vinyl.

Mr. Bacon reminded the Committee that the purpose of the meeting is to review the current plans as they relate to the SC-SDD design guidelines. He noted that there may be some things that do not match individual tastes but follow the guidelines.

Ms. Williams asked if solar panels could be installed on the buildings.

Mr. Graves answered yes, that the buildings could be retrofitted for solar panels.

Mr. Marquet said the goal is to make the buildings as energy-efficient as they can be – following the Sustainability Guidelines – through means such as the insulation and other prep items that can be done now.

Karla Fox asked about the colors for the façades.

Mr. Graves said that the development team had not yet decided on colors as the focus continues to be on the design of the building interiors and façades.

Ms. Roe referred to the design guidelines and expressed concern that the buildings looked too monolithic.

Mr. Toledano explained that the team is still working on how to break up the façades more and are examining several options.

Mr. Graves then gave an overview of DL-1/2, beginning with the commercial floor. He explained the need for commercial access at both the front and the back of the building due to the greater number of smaller tenants. He showed the Committee the group of smaller spaces linked together with a lobby on the first floor and a separate lobby for the residential units. Mr. Graves then presented an overview of a typical residential floor.

Ms. Moynihan questioned the inclusion of three bathrooms in the three bedroom units and expressed a concern for water usage.

Mr. Graves explained that EDR, who will develop, manage, and own the residential units, had requested one bathroom per bedroom in those units. He then explained that water usage is determined by the number of people in a given unit rather than the number of bathrooms.

Ms. Webster asked whether the façades of DL-1/2 would be staggered, to which Mr. Graves replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Moynihan expressed concern about students living in the three bedroom units.

Mr. Toledano reviewed the laws regarding housing and explained that EDR and LeylandAlliance plan for a mix of residents based on the market studies conducted in the area.

Ms. Webster questioned whether or not the brick façade for DL-1 was real brick.

Mr. Graves replied that the brick is real but thin. He then explained the elevation diagrams and noted the plans for outdoor seating and a mezzanine. He showed the Committee a tower facing Town Square; where façades step up the hill; and how storefronts will be reworked. He explained that the building has a one-story base, a three-story body, and a one-story “hat.” He pointed to where the tower piece stuck out from the façade. Mr. Graves added that the storefronts would be wrapped with wood trim for a more traditional feel.

Mr. Haidous asked whether the buildings would be lighted at night.

Mr. Graves commented that the design guidelines include specific restrictions on the lighting options and added that he did not think it would be appropriate to fully light the façades but that there would be strategic lighting.

Mr. Fitzgerald reminded the Committee that the streetscape plans would include street lighting similar to what is currently found along the pedestrian walkway near the Town Hall.

Mr. Marquet added that the large windows on the retail level will help animate the space as light will be visible from those windows.

Mr. Graves said that the team is still working on the façades and that many options within what is allowed by the design guidelines are being examined.

Mr. Toledano explained that the team is trying to find a balance; they do not want a long, uninterrupted building but they also do not want the building to look fake or contrived.

Chris Kueffner asked if other options for the backs of the buildings would be examined, including possibly changing the sizes of windows.

Ms. Webster commented that the selection of different trims could aid in differentiating the façades.

Mr. Toledano agreed with the sentiments and took note of the suggestions. He added that the plans being reviewed are more “big picture” and that once those are more set, then the finer details can be fully worked out.

Mr. Toledano then introduced the Committee to TS-2 and recapped the evolving history of the building. He noted that the building has two big jobs to perform: 1) TS-2 will anchor Town Square, and 2) it will obscure the parking garage.

Mr. Graves reviewed the basic plans for the first floor including the orientation and basic details of the mechanical elements. He pointed out two lobbies, one around the corner and the other facing EDR's planned management office in DL-1/2. He noted that, at this time, the tenants for TS-2 remain largely undefined.

Mr. Toledano said the main concern is that the façade facing the Town Square have a more formal presence as it addresses a main public space.

Mr. Haidous asked whether the building would abut the garage.

Mr. Graves said yes, it would be adjacent to the garage and separated by a seismic joint. He explained the intermodal transportation center (which has not yet been designed) will include entries to both the building and the garage so that residents have access to both.

Mr. Graves then reviewed the plans for the upper residential floors with the Committee. He said that a major difference between TS-2 and the other buildings is the inclusion of a courtyard. He explained that the first floor retail floor will extend from the front of the building to the garage but that the residential floors will not extend the entire way back. Instead, he showed the Committee a courtyard that would be built above the first floor with the upper floors looking down on it. He said that the second floor residential units will have direct access to the courtyard while the upper floors will have access through a community entrance.

Mr. Millman asked for details on the garage's exterior walls that will face the courtyard.

Mr. Toledano explained that the garage will be owned by the Town, who received the state grant for it. He said that the designer for the garage had just recently been selected, so the final design is not yet known. He added that because the garage and TS-2 will have different owners (the Town and Leyland, respectively), there are zoning regulations which will apply along those property lines. He said that, in effect, these regulations mean that there will need to be a solid wall between the garage and TS-2 even in those areas where the courtyard is located.

Mr. Kueffner asked whether the prominent placement of elevators was consistent with the Sustainability Guidelines and other efforts to promote environmental sustainability.

Mr. Graves explained the choice of the elevators was based on energy efficiency and the number was determined by the expected wait times in each building.

Mr. Fitzgerald commented that the elevators meet ADA requirements.

Mr. Millman asked whether there was a way to make the stairways pleasant areas to encourage use. He mentioned ventilation, functioning windows, and other opportunities for the stairs.

Mr. Graves replied that the stairways would be built to code and that, as with the other public areas, would be air-conditioned. He said there would be opportunities to brighten the stairways through paint choices as well.

Mr. Bacon asked whether the residential units on the upper floors of TS-2 would have decks or balconies opening up to the courtyard area.

Mr. Graves said that only the second floor units would have courtyard decks. He said that the courtyard would be fairly narrow and the design team wanted to avoid having upper decks or balconies shading the courtyard below.

Mr. Haidous asked about fire plans for TS-2 and the garage.

Mr. Graves explained that all of the buildings would be built according to the building code and that accommodating regulations for fire safety had directed the design of TS-2 to some extent.

Mr. Haidous asked if the exterior lighting would be consistent from Storrs Road up Dog Lane and along Village Street.

Mr. Toledano replied that yes, the lighting would be consistent. He explained that there will be a streetscape plan to create a pleasant environment.

Mr. Fitzgerald added that the plan is to use the same type of lighting that was used along the pedestrian walkway/downtown connector near Town Hall.

Ms. Paterson asked that the light poles include electrical outlets.

Mr. Toledano added that the light poles should include banner arms and hardware.

Mr. Graves reviewed the current plans for the exterior of TS-2 and explained that the façade as depicted was a “work in progress.” He reiterated that the façade for TS-2 will be a major focal point as it will face the Town Square. Mr. Graves pointed out important details including roof lines, window sizes, trims, and a parapet that will all help to emphasize the corner without competing with neighboring buildings.

Ms. Roe commented that she feels variety makes spaces lively and active. She cited examples of Prague and other cities wherein many different façades exist side-by-side to create an engaging space despite competing with each other. She expressed her preference for more variety in the façades.

Mr. Millman commented that what is missing when looking at the preliminary design plans is a three dimensional view.

Mr. Fitzgerald agreed and referred to the master plan and design guidelines which included more three dimensional renderings.

Greg Padick reminded the Committee that street trees and other landscaping elements will be a part of the final design.

Mr. Hand asked if all of the residential units in the buildings reviewed would be rentals and whether for sale units were still part of the plan

Mr. Toledano answered yes to both questions. He explained that the current market is more favorable towards rentals, which is what is planned for the first phase. He added that the plan is for for-sale units in later phases, which will be determined by the market as well.

Ms. Moynihan asked if there were still plans for office spaces.

Mr. Toledano answered yes, there will be office spaces in the downtown and added that the development team has been approached by some people who are interested. He noted that no one has yet signed a letter of intent for office space.

Mr. Haidous asked what the transition plan for the demolition area once Phases 1A and 1B are built.

Mr. Toledano said that the short term plan is just to get the area cleared; a transition plan has not been finalized.

Mr. Fitzgerald said the area could just be seeded as an extension of the green until construction starts.

Mr. Marquet said that, as the Phase 1A and 1B buildings go up, general interest in the project will increase, and Phase 1C will begin to take clearer shape.

Ms. Williams asked about the live/work concept.

Mr. Toledano explained that the idea behind live/work is that a commercial tenant would also have a residential unit directly above the commercial. He gave examples of dentist offices or law offices as typical iterations of the live/work concept. He said that the development team would still be open to having such units, particularly along the Village Street.

Mr. Toledano then recapped the discussion and said that the development team will take the Committee's feedback and continue to work on the plans.

Mr. Haidous asked about the next steps.

Mr. Bacon said that the timing has not yet been determined, but eventually the Committee will need to make a recommendation to the Board regarding the plans. He reminded the Committee that a special meeting will need to be scheduled in the coming weeks and encouraged the Committee members to make sure they can attend.

## **5. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 7:45 pm.

*Minutes prepared by Kathleen M. Paterson.*