

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE
Mansfield Downtown Partnership office**

Tuesday, February 16, 2016

MINUTES

Members: Chair Steve Bacon, Paul Aho, Karla Fox, Manny Haidous, Jon Hand, Chris Kueffner, and Betsy Paterson

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Kathleen Paterson

Guests: Katie DeLany with The Oaks on the Square; Lou Marquet with LeylandAlliance; Kristin Schwab, UConn Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture; UConn students Michael Bruno, Yuting Liu, Guang Zhou, and Myles Simon

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 December 15, 2015

There was no quorum to approve the minutes.

4. Discussion of Preliminary Public Spaces Plan for Storrs Center

Kristin Schwab and her students Michael Bruno, Yuting Liu, Guang Zhou, and Myles Simon introduced themselves.

The UConn team did an initial site walk before the last Committee meeting and reported back to the Committee on their initial thoughts about the spaces.

Since that meeting, each student has been assigned a space to focus on and provide options.

Ms. Schwab proceeded with a Power Point presentation linking the current work back to the larger public spaces plan she and two of her students had developed a few years ago. In particular, she pointed to two items that were being carried over to this project – the review of pocket parks and an urban trail/wayfinding pathway.

Ms. Schwab said she is working with the Town Sustainability Committee on how to re-envision the Town Hall parking area off of Storrs Road. The goal is to see if there may be funding in the plan in the next budget.

With respect to plans downtown, Lou Marquet mentioned the idea of tactical urbanism which he has seen in Raleigh, NC. QR codes were included on signage that people can access with their phones. Ms. Schwab said this might be an idea for the urban trail.

Ms. Schwab showed images of other well designed and fun public spaces such as swings in Philadelphia and a parking garage in Pasadena.

Myles Simon reviewed the overall Storrs Center site noting the lack of a significant entrance to Wilbur Cross from Charles Smith Way.

Yuting Liu reviewed options for the corridor between Mooyahs and Geno's. The area is very shaded which implies that any plantings be shade tolerant. Ms. Liu looked at the possibility of a wall with or without vegetation.

Mr. Marquet noted that he liked the concept with lower planters as it makes the area appear larger.

Mr. Marquet suggested that the Town Fire Marshal be part of the discussion as need to make sure no items are added that could fall over and block the path.

He noted that maintenance in the winter in this area is tough. Planters may need to be rolled in for the spring and taken out in the winter. Ms. Schwab agreed that the plowing and shoveling in this corridor would require that plantings be raised.

Manny Haidous advocated for better lighting in this corridor.

Mike Bruno reviewed the grassy area between Brueggers and Dunkin Donuts.

Mr. Marquet noted that there are grease traps there that people will need to access.

Mr. Bruno's design emphasizes this area as a miniature art space. He suggested adding archways on the walkway. Another possibility would be a light feature such as the light pylons on the Town Square.

Other ideas include adding pictures of Mansfield on the fence that hides the dumpsters.

Mr. Marquet suggested looking at the timing on when the dumpster is picked up and trash taken away.

He said there may be a need to remove the tree and wall near the end of the dumpster. Mr. Bruno suggested that perhaps more vegetation could be done in this area to block the dumpster.

Mr. Bruno suggested that small events could be held in this area.

He also suggested a sitting wall.

Guang Zhou reviewed the courtyard near Bliss and matching courtyard across Wilbur Cross Way.

His first concept is to put a wooden deck stage on the Bliss side which would include planting beds. Stone seating cubes would be another element. Mr. Zhou wanted to use wood in this area.

Mr. Marquet said there will be restaurants (Katmandhu Kitchen) on the opposite side. He said the location of a wall needs to be considered there as the restaurants will likely have tables and chairs outside.

Paul Aho, Jon Hand, and Kathleen Paterson left the meeting.

Mr. Zhou's 2nd concept is an art wall. Lights would be added into seats.

Katie DeLany left the meeting.

Myles Simon reviewed ideas for the landscaping strip across from Educational Playcare and near the University Plaza building. Some of the concepts that Mr. Simon offered were an area for recreation/enclosed playground, beer garden or a dog park.

He said an option for a playground is a "king crawler" type of playscape. Ms. Schwab emphasized that it would be contained and protected. Mr. Marquet suggested that it be gated. Ms. Schwab thought swings might be an option here as well. Mr. Marquet and Mr. Haidous emphasized the safety aspect of the road considering the traffic. Mr. Marquet said there may need to be more traffic calming elements.

Mr. Simon said a beer garden could include a water wall and vegetation to block the utilities boxes. Mr. Marquet said the wood shown in this option may be difficult to maintain but Chris Kueffner thought it would be faux wood. Ms. Schwab said a concept could pick up on the metal tree grates.

Mr. Simon said a dog park could include a water fountain or a potty area. There could be a course to teach dogs tricks. The far end with plants near the apartments would be maintained.

Ms. Schwab said Ms. Liu is also looking at the area in front of the Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center and the parking garage. Ms. Schwab said the team is also reviewing the larger sidewalk areas across from the Transportation Center.

Ms. Schwab said the goal would be a final presentation in April. Ms. van Zelm will pursue March 22 for a stakeholder meeting. Ms. Schwab offered UConn's studio space. Mr. Marquet said he could bring food.

5. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cynthia van Zelm