

## **Economic Development Commission Governance Subcommittee Meeting**

### **Draft Minutes**

Members Present: Valessa Souter- Kline, Lane Watson  
Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

#### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 AM.

#### 2. Opportunity for Public Comment

David Rhodes of Timber Drive in Mansfield commented that he was attending the meeting to learn more about how the EDC works, and so that he has more advance knowledge of projects planned for the next two years as he attends meetings of the Planning and Zoning Committee.

#### 3. Approval of Minutes of December 5, 2022 and July 7, 2023

Valessa Souter-Kline MOVED to approve the Minutes from December 5, 2022. Lane Watson SECONDED. The motion PASSED unanimously and the Minutes were approved.

Mr. Watson asked Cynthia van Zelm about the procedure for approving minutes from a meeting in which a quorum was not present, such as July 7, 2023. Ms. van Zelm explained that a formal record was still necessary for the meeting.

Ms. Souter-Kline MOVED to approve the Minutes from July 7, 2023. Mr. Watson SECONDED. The motion PASSED unanimously, and the Minutes were approved.

#### 4. Discussion items

##### a. Review of EDC Budget Priorities for FY2024-2025

Mr. Watson turned the discussion over to Ms. van Zelm to highlight the main points of the draft EDC Priorities for FY2024-2025. Ms. van Zelm described the requested increase in Town investment in economic development from \$40,000 to \$50,000 after discussions with Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth. The proposed increase was approved by the Mansfield Downtown Partnership's Finance and Growth Committee in December. She also highlighted the successful and productive August meeting with Mansfield Center business owners and contacts, and proposed that those meetings continue. Director of Planning and Development Jennifer Kaufman will reach out to the Perkins Corner businesses and create similar opportunities for collaboration and input.

Ms. van Zelm also highlighted the ongoing priority of Connecticut's Countryside, and the upcoming business forum to be hosted on UConn campus. The forum will include useful information sessions on AI in business, and utilizing the state's CT Visit site. Additionally, there will be a social at Hops 44 following the event as an opportunity for business owners to connect with EDC members, Partnership staff, and each other. Connecticut's Countryside has also received 10 applications from website developers to build upon the current draft website outline. Interviews will be held in the following weeks.

Other priorities highlighted by Ms. van Zelm included monthly issues of the Business Digest compiled by Mansfield Downtown Partnership Senior Communications Director Kathleen Paterson, as well as updating the EDC page on the Town website with more recent activities and information.

Ms. van Zelm also informed the Subcommittee that she and Events Coordinator Magdalena Pawlowski were scheduled to meet with the Cultural Coalition staff team to continue the discussions of a Cultural District in Mansfield. The Cultural District is an ongoing priority, and the Coalition staff have synthesized a potential general geographic area for a Cultural District based on the asset pinpointing activity in which both Ms. Souter- Kline and Mr. Watson participated at the last Community Input Session.

The next priorities Ms. van Zelm presented were the potential Commercial Façade Improvement Program to be presented to the Town in spring, based on the memo researched by Partnership Administrative Assistant Rosemary Watson, as well as the public art projects funded through ARPA. Ms. van Zelm explained that she was currently in contact with Rise Up to discuss potential mural ideas. Ms. Souter- Kline confirmed that Rise Up is a Connecticut-wide organization. Ms. van Zelm said that they were also responsible for the coordination of the Martin Luther King Jr. mural on the front of the Mansfield Community Center.

Next, Ms. van Zelm highlighted the Wayfinding and Signage Plan. The Partnership has identified a contractor to develop signs for Phase I (parks and Downtown Storrs), and are planning to have them put up during summer.

Ms. van Zelm said that Kathleen Paterson and Town Communication Specialist Margaret Chatey have the lead on marketing efforts, including the advertisements in the Jorgensen performance schedule and Summer Fun and Dining Guide. Ms. van Zelm also said that the town-wide Restaurant Week / Taste 2 Towns has registered seven Mansfield restaurants to participate thus far, including three newcomers to town. Ms. Souter- Kline expressed her pleasure that national chains with franchises in Town were still able to participate.

Finally, Ms. van Zelm discussed Taste of Mansfield including the "mini grants" encouraging purchase of local products, as well as the third annual Champion Award. Mansfield Farms to Families, which is an effort coordinated by Human Services and promoted through Taste of Mansfield continues to do great work providing fresh foods to families in Town.

Ms. Souter Kline inquired about promoting the Storrs Farmers Market. Ms. van Zelm said she would bring up the subject with Margaret Chatey and Rosemary Watson, as they are closely involved with Taste of Mansfield.

The subcommittee agreed by consensus to recommend the EDC Budget Priorities for FY2024-2025 to the full EDC.

5. Communications

There were no communications updates.

6. Future meetings

a. Future meeting topics – EDC member recruitment

Ms. van Zelm offered to enlist the help of EDC Chair Steve Ferrigno to help David Rhodes understand the general EDC process and the Development Project Review Subcommittee in particular. Additionally, the group discussed recruitment, participation standards, and the seats which would be up in April of 2024. They agreed that Chair Ferrigno would take the lead in those processes.

7. Adjournment

Ms. Souter- Kline MOVED to adjourn the meeting of the EDC Subcommittee on Governance. Mr. Watson SECONDED. The motion PASSED unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 AM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by  
Rosemary Watson  
Administrative Assistant  
Mansfield Downtown Partnership