

MINUTES

Members Present: Chair Dwight Codr, Sarah Dufresne, Linnea Nikitas, Valessa Souter-Kline, Gail Zaicek

Staff Present: Steve Ferrigno

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Dwight Codr called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 11, 2025

In the absence of a quorum, the commissioners did not vote on the draft minutes of December 11, 2025.

4. REPORTS

A. Staff Updates

Steve Ferrigno discussed the upcoming launch of Taste 2 Towns Mansfield and Windham restaurant week. He reported that 27 restaurants have registered to participate. Mr. Ferrigno also spoke about the parking survey progress and an upcoming meeting with LAZ to discuss potential improvements to parking in Downtown Storrs.

Mr. Ferrigno offered additional updates on planned activations of Betsy Paterson Square and growth of the Gameday Shuttle program.

B. Business Updates

Mr. Ferrigno updated the Commission on the grand opening of Campus Mart and the upcoming expansion of Action Packed.

C. Housing Updates

Mr. Ferrigno said that The Mark at Mansfield has broken ground for the construction of the new housing complex.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS AT MEETING

A. Community Center Collaboration – Parents Night Out

Mr. Codr discussed promotion of the Parents Night Out program. Mr. Ferrigno said that a flyer for the program will be distributed to school aged children's parents in the MES and MMS virtual backpacks.

B. Networking – Collaboration Building Meeting

Linnea Nikitas offered to promote Taste 2 Towns at her business location. She also introduced herself as the newest member of the EDC.

Mr. Ferrigno discussed a potential networking event to encourage collaborative experiences produced by businesses in town. Ms. Nikitas described her floral business' collaborations with local restaurants to offer "bloom bar"- style activities.

Mr. Ferrigno described plans for a networking event, including ice breakers and "match-making" to pair businesses for collaborations. Ms. Dufresne expressed support for creative promotions to deliberately market experiences at businesses, especially those not centered on the student population.

Mr. Codr suggested also finding opportunities to support local tradespeople with home businesses.

C. Additional Goals / Priorities for 2026

The commissioners discussed their ideas and goals for 2026. In the absence of Amar Verma, the Commission tabled discussion of IT ecosystems. Mr. Codr reviewed plans for business visits, business recruitment, and further coordination with UConn and the NE CT Chamber of Commerce.

Gail Zaicek expressed support for business visits as a 2026 priority. Mr. Codr said that the EDC should prioritize fostering relationships between the Community Center, Youth Services, and the business community, growing the potential of the Parents Night Out program.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no updates to Communications.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Future Meeting Topics

The Commission agreed to discuss the minutes of December 11, 2025 at the following meeting.

B. Next Meeting Date – February 19th, 2026 – 6:00 PM – Virtual

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 6:50 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Rosemary Watson
Administrative Assistant
Mansfield Downtown Partnership

ACTION ITEMS:

- Steve Ferrigno to provide Taste 2 Towns promotional signage for display at Rooted Dreams showroom
- Steve Ferrigno to follow up with Nancy McKenney on potential dates for hosting a networking event at Hops 44