

MINUTES

Members Present: Chair S. Ferrigno, L. Aldrich, N. McKenney, V. Souter-Kline, L. Watson

Members Absent: K. Dilaj, A. Raggi

Ex-Officio Members Present: A. Moran

Ex-Officio Members Absent: B. Coleman

Staff Present: R. Aylesworth, Town Manager; C. van Zelm, Executive Director, Mansfield Downtown Partnership; J. Stern, Administrative Assistant, Mansfield Downtown Partnership

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Ferrigno called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

McKenney MOVED, Souter-Kline SECONDED to approve the November 17, 2022 minutes as presented. Motion PASSED unanimously.

Watson MOVED, Souter-Kline SECONDED to approve the December 15, 2022 minutes as presented. Motion PASSED unanimously.

4. REPORTS

A. Subcommittee Reports

None of the subcommittees had met since the previous EDC meeting.

B. Staff Updates

Van Zelm said the second annual Taste 2 Towns Restaurant Week will take place February 20 - March 5. McKenney confirmed that Hops 44 will participate, and van Zelm said Gansett Wraps, Dog Lane Café, and Fenton River Grill are committed as well. The deadline for restaurants to sign up is February 6, and \$5,000 has been raised so far from sponsors. Van Zelm noted that Restaurant Week grew out of discussions between Moran and Windham Mayor Tom DeVivo about collaborations between the towns.

Van Zelm said the EDC members have been invited to the Connecticut's Countryside summit on January 30 at Patriots Park Lodge in Coventry. Some of the recent initiatives of Connecticut's Countryside have involved funding a website for the region, drafting a brochure, and coordinating Earth Day events held by the four towns.

Van Zelm said she will forward the Commission a referral from the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding two proposed zoning amendments going to public hearing February 21. One proposal is to increase the minimum percentage of affordable housing in multi-family developments to 15%; the other is for a moratorium on multi-family housing in the Pleasant Valley Zone and the floating Design Multiple Residence Zone. She will contact the Development Project Review Subcommittee about holding a meeting to discuss the proposal before the next EDC meeting.

Van Zelm noted an article included in the meeting packet about the Helping Hand program, which Little Aladdin, Moe's, Pizza Mike's, and Stix 'n' Stones participated in. She suggested, and Ferrigno agreed to, writing a thank-you letter from Ferrigno and the EDC to the participating restaurants.

Souter-Kline MOVED, Aldrich SECONDED to authorize the Development Project Review Subcommittee to write a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the two proposed amendments. Motion PASSED unanimously.

In response to a question from Ferrigno, van Zelm said the \$5,000 in sponsorship for Restaurant Week will be used for promotions as well as a kickoff event that will be held at the Graduate Storrs.

C. Business Updates (Openings/Closings)

Ferrigno confirmed that Fresh Fork Café closed. Commission members and staff noted that Stix 'n' Stones recently rearranged and added an additional restaurant wing.

D. Housing Updates

Ferrigno noted that demolition has begun to make way for The Standard and construction is in progress for UConn's new South Campus dormitory. Other housing updates are included on the story map on the Town website.

E. EDC Calendar

There are no significant updates.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS AT MEETING

A. Organizational Meeting (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary)

Watson MOVED, Souter-Kline SECONDED to approve Steve Ferrigno as Chair, Kristin Dilaj as Vice Chair, and Valessa Souter-Kline as Secretary. Motion PASSED unanimously.

B. Re-approval of 2023 Calendar – Reschedule April Governance Subcommittee Meeting

Stern said the April regular meeting of the Governance Subcommittee had accidentally been scheduled for Good Friday and suggested rescheduling it to Friday, April 14.

Souter-Kline MOVED, McKinney SECONDED to approve the 2023 meeting calendar with the above change. Motion PASSED unanimously.

C. Review 2023 Terms of Members

Ferrigno said Watson and Souter-Kline have each agreed to serve an additional term.

D. Discussion of EDC Delegate for Review of Taste of Mansfield Champion Award

Aldrich expressed interest in serving as the EDC delegate for review of the Taste of Mansfield Champion Award.

E. Town Council Budget Presentation

Ferrigno said he expects the Town Council budget presentation to be ready by the next EDC meeting. Aylesworth said it will be presented to the Council in March or April.

F. Town/UConn Collaboration Update

Moran said the Town/UConn framework team recently held a meeting and introduced UConn President Radenka Maric to the goals of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership. She said UConn's commitment to Town/UConn collaborations remains strong and that Lloyd Blanchard, formerly UConn's Interim CFO, is now serving as Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Planning. Aylesworth said the Committee is

dedicated to making progress this year on the development of the framework. The smaller framework team met as well and plans to meet again in February.

Ferrigno noted an email from Aylesworth regarding two proposed roundabouts at Four Corners. Moran said a sidewalk from the Towers dormitories to Four Corners has been discussed as well. The State has been looking into creating roundabouts at certain intersections and has expressed interest in doing so at Four Corners to improve safety in anticipation of the construction of The Standard. Aylesworth said roundabouts have been envisioned at both the intersection of Routes 44 and 195 and the intersection of Routes 320 and 195. The hope is that a pair of effective roundabouts near a prominent university can help garner support for them across the State. The Commission viewed and discussed the plans for the roundabouts, with Souter-Kline expressing support for more sidewalks in the Town.

G. Promotion of Arts in Mansfield; State of Connecticut Cultural District Discussion

There are no significant updates. Ferrigno said the Town is still waiting for feedback from UConn about the possibility of forming a Cultural District.

Ferrigno also mentioned that the new elementary school is near completion, with a target move-in date during April vacation. He hopes the school will be an indirect economic driver by attracting families to the Town, and he noted that the school will be net zero and could serve as a test case for net-zero schools across the State.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

All noted.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

B. Future Meeting Topics

No future meeting topics were discussed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Watson MOVED, McKenney SECONDED to adjourn. Motion PASSED unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Joshua Stern
Administrative Assistant
Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc.