

MINUTES

Members Present: Chair S. Ferrigno, C. Chukwuogor, K. Dilaj, V. Souter-Kline
L. Watson

Member Absent: A. Raggi

Ex-Officio Member Present: A. Moran

Ex-Officio Member Absent: B. Shaiken

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

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Ferrigno called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Souter-Kline MOVED, Dilaj SECONDED to approve the December 16, 2021 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion PASSED unanimously.

4. REPORTS

A. MEMBER UPDATES

No report.

B. Staff Updates

Van Zelm said she has been working with Thread City Development on a Mansfield-Willi Restaurant Week from February 21 to March 6. It will be a pilot program to promote our communities' restaurants especially during a slower time of the year.

C. Housing Updates

Van Zelm relayed the housing updates passed on by Linda Painter, Town Director of Planning and Development.

- Eagleville Green. The Town submitted an application for a Connecticut Communities Challenge Grant for the South Eagleville Road Corridor, including gap financing and funding for rooftop solar for Eagleville Green. The application also includes extensive pedestrian and traffic calming improvements to South Eagleville Road between Separatist Road and Storrs Road. The Mansfield Nonprofit Housing Development Corporation and the University of Connecticut partnered with the Town on this application.
- Masonicare. Town staff has had two meetings with the President/CEO of Masonicare and key members of his team to discuss their site on Maple Road and future development plans. Another

meeting is being scheduled for February after the Masonicare Board has met. Masonicare provided a letter of support for the Town's Connecticut Communities Challenge grant application for the South Eagleville Corridor.

- The Standard at Four Corners. Applicant team and PZC's peer review consultants presented at public hearing on January 18, 2022. Applicant requested that hearing be continued to allow them to make revisions based on staff and peer review comments. Commission asked several questions related to potential for inclusion of solar, electric vehicle charging stations, and how the project would be marketed and promote a living environment that is appealing to a diverse population, not just students.
- CMC Storrs (Villa Hills Golf Course). The applicant has withdrawn the Inland Wetlands License for this project based on initial review comments that led to the need for redesign. Painter expects them to resubmit once their design has been modified to address the concerns raised.
- Other Residential Development. Staff continues to meet with prospective residential developers and will update the Commission with more details as applications are received.

D. Business Updates (Closings/Opening)

Van Zelm said she thought Yamato on North Eagleville Road might have closed. Ferrigno said he noticed a new sign and will go by and check the sign.

E. EDC Calendar

Van Zelm said she will be working on a draft presentation from the EDC to the Town Council for the February meeting.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS AT MEETING

A. Updates from Governance Subcommittee and Business Support and Outreach Subcommittee

Watson said the Governance Subcommittee had reviewed the staff suggested budget priorities and had not made any changes.

The Subcommittee also talked about new members. Moran said Brian Coleman is interested in serving on the EDC as an ex-officio member. Aylesworth noted the appointment would be a Town Council appointment.

Ferrigno said he is happy to follow-up with any potential new members recommended by the Governance Subcommittee.

Ferrigno said the Business Support and Outreach Subcommittee did not change any of the priorities for this Subcommittee on the Work Plan Priorities. He did say that the Subcommittee will work on revising the current business interview form to make it more succinct. Ferrigno said the Subcommittee will work off the business list that is being updated by Mansfield Downtown Partnership staff, and will identify who to interview initially. One of the questions that will be asked of the businesses is the best way for them to receive information/communications – phone, social media, etc.

Chukwuogor noted a number of challenges for small businesses including funding, supply chain, and marketing resources. She said the Subcommittee will explore resources provided by the CT Small Business Development Center and the CT office of the Small Business Administration.

Moran noted that the Town Council will meet in February to evaluate the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds. She said \$300,000 has been proposed for small businesses and van Zelm has articulated some suggestions for how that funding may be distributed. In addition, \$75,000 is being proposed for public art, which could help with street appeal in front of businesses.

Aylesworth said that he has been working to get COVID-19 test kits out to grocery stores and restaurants, noting that employees at these establishments may be amongst the most vulnerable. In response to a question from Chukwuogor, he said he is working on this initiative on a staff level with van Zelm, Eastern Highlands Health District, the Town Emergency Services Dept., among others. Chukwuogor asked about the EDC being involved and Aylesworth said that could be discussed if further distributions are warranted.

B. Additional Changes to Town Economic Development Website

Souter-Kline asked if there would be additional photos on the website. Van Zelm said the Town has contracted with Milton Levin to take additional photos.

C. Review of 2022 Priorities

There were no additional changes to the EDC's 2022 Priorities.

D. Discussion of FY22-23 Budget Priorities

Van Zelm shared a proposed overview of budget priorities for FY2022-2023 including \$40,000 for continued economic development staffing from the Partnership; \$50,000 to continue implementation of the Positioning & Marketing Development Plan; and \$5,000 for Taste of Mansfield.

E. Taste of Mansfield Hero Campaign

Van Zelm reviewed the Mansfield Hero Campaign which would annually recognize a producer, seller, or communicator/educator who is a leader in connecting the community through local food. She referred to the draft overview of criteria and process in the EDC packet.

Chukwuogor asked if there could be other awards for other categories. Van Zelm said the EDC has typically provided a recommendation for Mansfield Business of the Year, and other related awards to the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce.

Moran said the Hero award is a Taste of Mansfield program.

Ferrigno suggested starting with the Taste of Mansfield Hero award as a pilot and expand at a later time if needed.

F. Town/UConn Collaboration

Ferrigno said he, Aylesworth, and Moran were on the monthly call with UConn. Aylesworth said much of the meeting surrounding getting Dr. Radenka Maric up to speed in her role as interim UConn President. Van Zelm and UConn Senior Director of Operations (President's office) Cara Workman gave an overview of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership's recently completed Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Storrs and the Four-Town (Bolton, Coventry, Mansfield, and Tolland) economic development efforts.

Chukwuogor recommended that the Town reach out to the new President when she or he is appointed. Moran said this is a top priority for the Town. Moran said these monthly meetings were a direct result of trying to strengthen relationships with UConn.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

All noted.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Next regular meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

B. Future Meeting Topics

Ferrigno will meet with staff to discuss future topics.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chukwuogor MOVED, Souter-Kline SECONDED to adjourn. Motion PASSED unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Cynthia van Zelm
Executive Director
Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc.