



**Mansfield Downtown Partnership
Board of Directors
March 2, 2023
Virtual**

4:30 PM

DRAFT Minutes

Present: Ryan Aylesworth, Brian Coleman (via Zoom), Steve Ferrigno, Frank Gifford, Louis Goffinet, Rachel Goldberg, Toni Moran, Kyle Muncy, Ron Schurin, Colby Trembley, Sean Vasington, Emily Wicks, and Cara Workman

Absent: Mario Conjura

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director; Kathleen Paterson, Senior Communications Manager; Joshua Stern, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

President Kyle Muncy called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes of February 2, 2023

Cara Workman made a motion to approve the February 2, 2023 minutes. Steve Ferrigno seconded the motion. The motion passed with Brian Coleman abstaining and all other members in favor.

4. Executive Director Report

Cynthia van Zelm said the second annual Taste 2 Towns Restaurant Week is currently in its second week. She said Kathleen Paterson and Town Communications Manager Margaret Chatey have been involved in promotion efforts, including distributing posters and lawn signs and collaborating with Jorgensen, WILI, and some news outlets. WFSB is scheduled to film a feature tomorrow at Gansett Wraps. A survey will be sent out to the participating restaurants after the event ends on March 5.

Ms. van Zelm said signage consultant Merje gave a presentation to the Town Council about the Town's Wayfinding and Signage Plan. Once photos are taken of the locations, the Plan will be sent to the Connecticut Department of Transportation for review. The Plan will go out to bid this spring, and the hope is for phase 1 of the construction to begin in the fall.

Ms. van Zelm said the Connecticut's Countryside initiative received a grant from the Eastern Regional Tourism District, to go toward a promotional video for the region.



Ms. van Zelm said the Partnership has been interviewing candidates for the position of Event Coordinator.

In response to a question from Ms. Moran, Ms. van Zelm said Educational Playcare changed its name to BrightPath but has the same owner and staff.

Mr. Coleman asked about the cost of implementing the Wayfinding and Signage Plan. Ms. van Zelm said the cost is still being evaluated based on recommendations from Merje.

Mr. Coleman asked how much money is left over from the ARPA Local Business and Nonprofit Relief Fund Program and how those funds will be allocated. Ms. van Zelm said \$20,000 - \$30,000 is left over. Ryan Aylesworth said the funds will be added to other ARPA funds that have not yet been appropriated.

5. Summary of Board Assessment

Mr. Muncy said that in response to feedback from Board members, the Board Assessment will be conducted on an as-needed basis rather than annually going forward. He said one common theme in this year's Assessment was the desire for more Board member recruitment efforts and a more diverse membership, particularly among the Town and UConn appointees. He also said several members gave positive feedback about the Board's recent engagement with the downtown property owners.

6. Report and Action Items from Committees/Working Groups

Working Groups

Sean Vasington, Chair of the Promotion/Public Spaces Working Group, said 11 of the initiatives on the Strategic Action Plan have been assigned. Of these, the top four are all between 55% and 80% complete, and the other seven are between 5% and 65% complete.

Mr. Vasington said one of the goals of the Wayfinding and Signage Plan is to drive more foot traffic to the downtown. He said students from the UConn Landscape Architecture program will complete an inventory of the downtown furniture based on their recent walkthrough. Their focus is on viewing the downtown as a whole. The Landscape Architecture program will present recommendations to the Board at its May meeting.

Ms. van Zelm noted the mural recently completed by Jillian Welenc in the space formerly occupied by Bliss. Emily Wicks said two UConn professors will be creating murals in other vacant downtown storefronts, to be completed by March 22, as part of UConn's Tree of Life program.

Mr. Ferrigno, Chair of the Property Owner/Business Owner Engagement Working Group, said he, Ms. van Zelm, and Rachel Goldberg will meet tomorrow about engaging UConn students to write profiles of the downtown businesses.

Mr. Muncy, Chair of the Sustainable Funding Working Group, said the Partnership has received large contributions from three of the downtown property owners. He expects Barnes & Noble to renew its contribution as well.

Governance

Chair Frank Gifford said the Governance Committee met Monday and discussed the feedback from the Board Assessment. They also interviewed Ron Schurin about his experience as a new Board member and approved the recent revisions to the Executive Director job description.

Celebrate Mansfield Festival

Chair Emily Wicks said the Festival Committee met last week to review and plan ideas for the Festival. One idea that was discussed was to engage more with the booths and encourage them to take on more activities or distribute giveaways. The Committee would also like to engage more with UConn Athletics, particularly sports that are not in season in the fall, and the scarecrow contest is likely to return. Ideas to mark the 20th anniversary of the Festival, such as recording stories or creating public art to represent what people like about Mansfield, were discussed as well. The Festival will not include a parade or a beer garden this year. Ms. Wicks said the Festival Committee is looking for new members.

Finance and Growth

Chair Toni Moran said the Finance and Growth Committee met recently to review the December 31, 2022 financials.

Toni Moran made a motion to approve the December 31, 2022 financials. Cara Workman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Executive

The Executive Committee met earlier today to conduct Ms. van Zelm's evaluation.

Ms. Moran made a motion to go into Executive Session according to CGS § 1-200 (6) (A) for the purpose of conducting Ms. van Zelm's annual performance evaluation. Mr. Trembley seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The Board went into Executive Session at 4:59 p.m.

7. Executive Session – Personnel in accordance with CGS §1-200 (6) (a)

Present: Board members: Mr. Aylesworth, Mr. Coleman (via Zoom), Mr. Ferrigno, Mr. Gifford, Mr. Goffinet, Ms. Goldberg, Ms. Moran, Mr. Muncy, Mr. Schurin, Mr. Trembley, Mr. Vasington, Ms. Wicks, and Ms. Workman

Partnership staff: Ms. van Zelm

The Board came out of Executive Session at 5:19 p.m.

8. Correspondence and Communications

All noted.

7. Adjourn

Ms. Wicks moved to adjourn. Louis Goffinet seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.