



**Mansfield Downtown Partnership
Board of Directors
March 3, 2022
By Teleconference**

4:30 PM

Minutes

Present: Ryan Aylesworth, Brian Coleman, Mario Conjura, Steve Ferrigno, Frank Gifford, Prabhas KC, Toni Moran, Kyle Muncy, Sean Vasington, Emily Wicks, and Cara Workman

Ex-Officio Board member Diana Pelletier

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director

1. Call to Order

President Kyle Muncy called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes of February 3, 2022

Toni Moran made a motion to approve the February 3, 2022 minutes. Steve Ferrigno seconded the motion.

4. Executive Director Report

Cynthia van Zelm said Mansfield-Willi Restaurant Week continues until March 6. She thanked Partnership Senior Communications Manager Kathleen Paterson and Town Communications Specialist Margaret Chatey for their promotion of Restaurant Week, and Brian Coleman for visiting and posting about his visits to many of the restaurants. Ms. Moran went to a few restaurants as well and they were quite full. Ms. van Zelm said there will be a debrief with Partnership and Town staff as well as the Thread City Development team of Chris McNaboe and Andrew Gutt. She is suggesting that a survey be sent to the participating restaurants for their feedback.

Ms. van Zelm said Josh Stern has been hired as the Partnership's new Administrative Assistant.

Ms. van Zelm said The Standard, a mixed-use development at Four Corners, was approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission last week.

Sean Vasington said he enjoyed and commended Mr. Coleman's positive reviews. He suggested keeping the positive vibes going around the Downtown Storrs and Mansfield business community.

Mr. Vasington referred to the upcoming public meeting on the redevelopment of Mansfield Apartments and shared the info sheet on the project on the screen. This is the first step in the state environmental review process. The public scoping meeting will be held on March 10 at 6:30. Staff from the Town Planning and Development, and Engineering departments will attend the meeting.

Mr. Vasington said the goal is redevelop the Mansfield Apartment site with a private entity to build apartments with up to 900 beds. There will be additional parking for a total of 450 spots in surface spaces and an elevated parking deck. There will be utility improvements as well. There is no intent to develop outside the current footprint of Mansfield Apartments. The project will also align with the entrance with Town Hall entrance on South Eagleville Road.

In response to a question from Mr. Coleman, there are currently 270 beds at Mansfield Apartments.

Mr. Coleman said he wanted the Board to know of a possible conflict of interest with him serving on the Board of Directors but also on the Town Council. He is an advocate for Downtown Storrs but also an advocate for Mansfield taxpayers. There may be Council votes on the finances of the Partnership that he may not be able to vote on, and would need to recuse himself.

Ms. Moran said as a general practice, it is not considered a conflict to vote on Partnership financial issues as discussed at the Council.

Ryan Aylesworth said he and Mr. Coleman spoke about this issue in general and he will consult with the Town attorney.

5. Next Steps for Implementation of Downtown Storrs Strategic Action Plan

Mr. Muncy referred to the draft implementation plan for the Strategic Action Plan strategies.

Ms. van Zelm put together three draft working groups – Promotion/Public Spaces, Property Owner/Business Owner Engagement, and Sustainable Funding. She said the goal would be to find chairs or leads for the working groups and start developing work plans.

Ms. van Zelm went through the 11 strategies in Tier One vis a vis the potential working groups.

She noted a few items including putting off the potential tenanting strategy until later in the year as the business community gets through the pandemic. However, she and President Muncy will bring the Hart and Oaktree teams together in a joint meeting.

Mr. Coleman asked when the working groups would meet. Ms. van Zelm said chairs will need to be determined but she hopes that the groups will start meeting in March.

Ms. Moran said she asked that the sustainable funding strategy not come under the Finance and Growth Committee purview as she feels people need to be involved who have done fundraising. She agrees with having Mr. Muncy as the lead with her involvement and Mr. Gifford's.

Mr. Muncy said in follow-up calls with Hart and Oaktree, the respective teams have been supportive of an annual financial commitment to the Partnership. It will help the Partnership's efforts. They are focused on repopulating the available space and support the businesses that are in operation.



Restaurant Week represents a good collaboration and our events show that people want to be out and about.

Mr. KC asked about an update on the Husky Hour Student Showcase. Ms. van Zelm said she thinks almost all spaces are accounted for to perform this spring.

Mr. Ferrigno asked if the strategies will be prioritized, as there is a lot of work to do. Mr. Muncy acknowledged the commitment but also noted that many of the strategies are staff driven. Ms. van Zelm will send out information on meetings to the working groups once she coordinates with Mr. Muncy.

Mr. Gifford asked Board members to think about volunteers to serve on these working groups. Mr. Muncy agreed and said the first meeting of each working group can include the discussion of additional members for the working groups.

6. Review of “New Business of the Year” Award

Ms. van Zelm reviewed the revised proposed New Business of the Year Award as previously discussed with the Board. After speaking with Cara Workman, she added a few changes with the most significant being adding that it is desirable that candidate be a member of the Partnership.

No further changes were made and Ms. van Zelm will distribute it to the Board for solicitation at the next meeting.

7. Review of Potential Changes to Personnel Policies re: Juneteenth Holiday

Ms. Moran moved to approve Juneteenth as an additional paid holiday for Partnership staff, and revise the Partnership Personnel Policies to reflect this change. Mario Conjura seconded the motion.

Ms. Moran said the Town is committed to equity and diversity, acknowledging Juneteenth as one way to show this commitment. It will become a significant event in the town’s history. She would not want staff to work on this commemoration.

Mr. Coleman said it is important to recognize emancipation day. He asked if Juneteenth was a state holiday. Some union contracts have a provision that all federal holidays are holidays with pay. Mr. Coleman asked Mr. Aylesworth for clarification.

Mr. Aylesworth said Partnership employees are not governed by union contracts. Juneteenth was included as a Town holiday during union contracts in negotiations last year.

Mr. Coleman said in other situations, this holiday has to be negotiated.

Ms. Moran said Partnership employees are not subject to union contracts of the Town. It is not an issue of negotiation but an issue of revising the Partnership Personnel Policies.

Mr. Vasington confirmed that Juneteenth is not a state holiday.

Mr. Coleman said he will not support the motion if Juneteenth is not a state holiday.

The motion was approved with Mr. Coleman voting against the motion.

7. Report from Committees/Working Groups

Celebrate Mansfield Festival

Chair Emily Wicks said the Committee has a new member – Christine Ballestrini.

The Committee is also discussing whether the Festival will include a rain date vs. a rain location.

Ms. Wicks said the Committee is also reviewing the budget for the event.

Finance and Growth

Chair Moran said the Committee reviewed the December 31, 2022 financials and recommended approval by the Board.

Ms. Moran moved to accept the December 31, 2021 financials. The motion was approved.

Governance Committee

Mr. Gifford said the Committee met earlier this week and he, Mr. KC and Ms. van Zelm had also met to determine the process to solicit a new UConn student representative on the Board. Mr. KC will be graduating in May.

There will also be Board openings for election at the annual meeting in June. He asked Board members to send any nominations to him or the Governance Committee for consideration at the Committee's next meeting.

8. Discussion of In Person Meetings

Ms. Moran said the Town Council will be going to in-person meetings beginning on March 14. Town committees can meet in person or virtual.

Mr. Muncy said he can talk to any Board members if they would have a difficult time meeting in person for the Board meetings. He wants to be as flexible as feasible.

Mr. Muncy reminded Board members to send in their Executive Director evaluation and begin thinking about who to select for "New Business of the Year."

9. Adjourn

Mr. Coleman made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Ferrigno seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:27 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cynthia van Zelm.