DRAFT MINUTES


Staff: M. Chathey, L. Painter, C. van Zelm,

Guests: Resident State Trooper’s Office: Sgt. T. Merrill (part-time)
Eastern Highlands Health District: R. Miller (part-time)

Absent: M. Gilbert, E. Holinko, V. Lorenz,

Chair Workman called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM

1. **Introduction of Sgt. Merrill**
   R. Aylesworth introduced Sergeant Timothy Merrill, and the group introduced themselves. Sgt. Merrill expressed that the Resident Troopers are eager to get out to the community to meet residents and UConn contacts. There are seven troopers assigned to Mansfield plus Sgt. Merrill. An additional Administrative Trooper is budgeted for 2022-23. Mansfield employs more Resident State Troopers than any other community in the state. B. Coleman invited Sgt. Merrill to be forthcoming with any new ideas he has for the office related to community outreach.

2. **Public Comment**
   The Registrar of Voters was on the call, but there was no public comment.

3. **Meeting Minutes**
   P. Aho moved the draft minutes for February 8, 2022 be approved, seconded by B. Coleman. Minutes approved unanimously.

4. **Updates**
   a. **Framework for Development.** C. Workman reported that the group has met monthly, and the recent focus has been on writing the framework and goals. A structure for decision-making at UConn, financials and timelines will also be specified. Major themes of the work are a) Economic and community development, b) Economic vitality and retention, c) Creating a neighborhood atmosphere for housing, and d) focusing on the relationships between the Town and the University and local areas as it relates to students. Long-term sustainability of businesses is key—ensuring there is a mechanism to help
businesses be successful. The Framework group has also focused on the shared goals of physical needs, especially housing to support needs of Mansfield and the University. Discussion has included about how to attract developers that will provide the housing needed to support low-income residents, graduate students, and young families. Identification of assets, the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development, the parcel book, and existing promotional materials about the Opportunity Zone will be folded into the plan to coordinate marketing efforts between the Town and UConn. R. Aylesworth expressed appreciation that the structure is beginning to take shape to move the plan forward.

b. Mansfield Downtown Partnership. C. van Zelm reported that MDP’s Board has formed three working groups to implement the Strategic Plan: Promotion and public spaces (Led by S. Vasington), Business and property-owners engagement and Sustainable funding. Many events are planned in April and May at Paterson Square including Poetry Month events and UConn musical group performances. Other Economic Development initiatives have included Mansfield-Willi Restaurant Week. A survey revealed positive feedback from participants, and plans are in place for improvements for next year. The Four-Town initiative has a second webinar planned, with support from UConn, about how local businesses can engage UConn students as employees. Nine responses came in to the RFP for marketing/branding support for the Four-Town group. Wayfinding project planning progresses with identification of destinations.

c. Planning and Development Update. L. Painter reported that Mansfield and UConn’s collaboration on the Community Challenge grant application was successful with the State awarding $4.85 million in funding. It will provide gap financing for Eagleville Green and infrastructure improvements along the South Eagleville corridor. Mansfield is also re-submitting to Congressman Courtney’s office an earmark to build a 10-foot wide, multi-use trail along Rte. 195 from Tower Loop Road on campus to Four Corners. A public survey will be distributed by Mansfield to gain input on regulations around cannabis establishments, hopefully before UConn students go home for the summer. R. Aylesworth thanked Ms Painter and Assistant Director of Public Works Dilaj for their extraordinary contribution to the successful grant applications. Mayor Moran added that the State reported that the collaboration with the University helped to touch on all aspects they were seeking. L. Painter added that C. van Zelm was also involved in developing the application. S. Vasington inquired whether Rte. 195 from So. Eagleville to Spring Hill Rd. should also be included in the sidewalk improvement plans. It was suggested that a meeting with Department of Transportation (DOT) about this section be scheduled to get it identified as a priority project within DOT’s regional plans.

C. Workman asked that Agenda Item 5 be moved up due to time limitations.

5. Town COVID-19 Update
R. Miller reported that there is an uptick in COVID cases due to the sub-variant. The rate is 5.6 cases per 100K population as of April 2. Vaccination clinics are still available at the Town Hall for adults on Monday and for children 5 and older on Thursday afternoons, and EHHD is booking more appointments for second boosters there. EHHD is still working closely with local school districts to identify symptomatic individuals and clusters of cases. Tolland, Windham and New London Counties are all within the LOW status for cases as rated by the CDC. This variant seems to be a milder form of Omicron variant and case prevalence and hospitalizations seem to be increasing more gradually. UConn still updates its dashboard daily with COVID data, and its aggregate count includes both self-reported and state-reported cases. Free test kits are available to students.

4. Updates (continued)
   d. Spring Activities at UConn and Outreach. J. Armstrong reported that the full list of activities on campus was distributed to Town officials and Troopers office. Activities have included UConn-Bound Days April 2 and 9, Huskython on April 2, Concert on April 8 (requiring masks) and Spring Weekend April 21-23 for UConn students only. Final exams week concludes with Commencement on May 7 to 9. Areas of concern off-campus have been discussed with the Troopers. Outreach to students with social media has been a focus. C. Workman asked how the Hunting Lodge Rd. closure would affect student traffic, especially pedestrian safety. R. Aylesworth says it is an emergency project, and Public Works is working to solve the problem as quickly as possible to minimize disruption. The area that is disrupted is from Separatist to No. Eagleville Rds., which is not as highly traveled. Orchard Acres is an alternative access point to campus for pedestrians.
   e. Pedestrian Safety/Transportation Working Group. J. Armstrong reported that the Active Transportation Plan group is looking at how campus accommodates all types of motor vehicles, cycles and scooters via roadways and walkways with a focus on safety. Public meetings and a web-based survey are being used to gather input from the public. The intention is to present a plan to the Town and UConn in mid-summer. R. Aylesworth also reported that there has been progress working with State DOT to improve pedestrian safety along So. Eagleville and Rte. 195. The Town is budgeting some improvements in Capital funding for 2022-23, but will need to work with UConn on cost sharing some safety improvements that federal funding will not cover. A safety audit is also planned with a consultant with State DOT.

6. UConn Construction Updates

S. Vasington reminded the group that there is a construction activity map on the map detailing projects. No new projects have been announced.

7. Other Business
a. **Encouraging Students to frequent Downtown Storrs Businesses.** C. Workman acknowledged that much effort is being initiated through the MDP Strategic Plan to emphasize Downtown Storrs.

b. **Issues related to Hotel on Campus.** C. Workman reported that the chillers causing the noise were replaced five years ago when the hotel was owned by the University. There are things that can be done to reduce the sound of the chiller. P. Aho suggested extending the wall might be helpful, and UConn facilities suggested some other sound-reducing actions.

8. **Future Agenda Items.**

T. Moran asked that the committee discuss how to enhance participation of UConn student voting, potentially adding a poll location on campus for the fall. Student Government could provide input to this. UConn Facilities and Mansfield Registrars should be involved in these conversations. Mansfield’s three different poll locations is also confusing to students, and J. Armstrong offered to assist with communicating that clarification. B. Coleman asked if the data is available on number of student voters, and T. Moran reported only on-campus student voting data is available.

A. Moran motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:18 PM, seconded by J. Armstrong. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Margaret Chatey
Administrator to the Committee

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 1:00 PM**