



**Mansfield Downtown Partnership
Board of Directors
May 5, 2022
Mansfield Town Hall
Town Council Chambers**

4:30 PM

Minutes

Present: Ryan Aylesworth (by phone), Brian Coleman, Mario Conjura (by phone), Steve Ferrigno (joined at 4:41), Frank Gifford, Prabhas KC, Toni Moran (joined at 4:55), Kyle Muncy, Sean Vasington (joined at 4:51), Emily Wicks, and Cara Workman

Absent: None

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director; Joshua Stern, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: Steve Bacon, Board Member Emeritus

1. Call to Order

President Kyle Muncy called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes of April 7, 2022

Cara Workman proposed to delete the last paragraph of item 5 in the minutes.

Brian Coleman made a motion to approve the April 7, 2022 minutes. Frank Gifford seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with the change as noted.

4. Executive Director Report

Cynthia van Zelm said the Town Council will review an application at their next meeting to direct a portion of the Town's ARPA funding toward local business assistance. Ryan Aylesworth said Mansfield was allotted \$370,000 in ARPA funding. The maximum amount that can be given to any individual business is \$10,000, and the plan is to offer funding packages in three different sizes. Mansfield does not qualify for funding for façade work.

Ms. van Zelm said Event Coordinator Denise Kegler organized two events for Poetry Month, featuring the E.O. Smith Drama Club and around 15 individual poets. These performances drew between 40 and 60 people. The UConn Rock Ensemble performed April 13 as part of the Husky Hour Student Showcase, and their performance attracted around 100 people; the Husky Hour performances on April 20 and 27 drew closer to 40 people each.

Ms. van Zelm said the Summer Stroll will take place May 26 and will feature performances, games, and a scavenger hunt, as well as happy hour drinks to attract a larger adult audience. The John E. Jackman Tour de Mansfield will take place June 4 from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Cyclists can choose either a 20- or 40-mile tour and will have the opportunity to explore the Gurleyville Grist Mill during the tour. Gansett Wraps will provide lunch for this event.

Ms. van Zelm said Summer Concerts on the Square will begin in June, with a full schedule this year. Mansfield's Department of Human Services will assist with Celebrate Pride and screen a movie on the Square. The community choir Consonare will perform on June 11. Ms. van Zelm encouraged Board members to volunteer at upcoming events, as well as at UConn orientation.

Ms. van Zelm also said the Annual Meeting will take place June 1 at the Innovation Partnership Building at UConn Tech Park, and the Board will hold a special meeting afterwards. A tour of the Innovation Partnership Building will be offered before the annual meeting. Ms. Workman said the Mansfield Economic Development Commission and the 4-Town Economic Development Steering Committee, as well as the Mansfield Town Council and Planning & Zoning Commission, will be invited on the tour.

5. Downtown Storrs Strategic Action Plan Working Groups Next Steps and Timeline

Ms. van Zelm said she and Sean Vasington met April 28 with Larisa Ortiz from Streetsense. It was suggested that the working groups meet every two to three weeks, develop top priorities for each of the Tier 1 strategies by early July, and each meet individually with Ms. Ortiz in mid-July. Streetsense will present feedback at the August 4 Board meeting.

Ms. van Zelm said the Promotion/Public Spaces working group met April 26 and focused on continued brainstorming. Steve Ferrigno said the Property Owner/Business Owner Engagement working group is planning a networking happy hour event, likely in June, for business owners to encourage them to collaborate and cross-promote their businesses. Mr. Muncy said the Sustainable Funding working group has not met since the last Board meeting.

6. Selection of Downtown Storrs New Business of the Year

Mario Conjura said he nominated Brooklyn Dumpling Shop for Downtown Storrs New Business of the Year because he finds its menu and automat style unique. He noted that the restaurant is owned by Matt Rusconi, who previously owned other restaurants in Downtown Storrs, and has received a great deal of press and media coverage.

Mr. Vasington said he nominated Fresh Fork Cafe. He noted that it offers a variety of vegan menu items. In addition, it is owned by a UConn alumnus, and Mr. Vasington said he appreciates businesses with ties to the community.

The Board discussed the two nominees.

Ms. Workman made a motion to approve Fresh Fork Cafe as Downtown Storrs New Business of the Year. Mr. Ferrigno seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. Report from Committees/Working Groups

Celebrate Mansfield Festival

Chair Emily Wicks said the Celebrate Mansfield Festival Committee met March 8. The Committee is focusing on sponsor outreach as well as looking for options for reusable plates, bowls, and utensils. There are also plans to grow the event with activities such as yoga, a 5K run, cornhole, and a climbing wall to attract more people from the broader region.

Executive

The Executive Committee has not met since the previous Board meeting.

Finance and Growth

Chair Toni Moran said the Finance and Growth Committee did not have a quorum at its last meeting. They discussed implementation of the strategic plan, the membership campaign, summer events, and filling storefronts.

Governance

Mr. Gifford said the Governance Committee met on April 25 and May 4 and advanced the nominations of Emily Wicks, Ron Schurin, and Louis Goffinet to the Partnership membership for consideration at the June 1 annual meeting. The Committee also interviewed five candidates for the UConn student representative Board position. They will defer action on a nominee until the annual meeting as there is a proposed amendment to the bylaws to allow more than one student representative.

8. Correspondence and Communications

No correspondence or communications were discussed.

The Board recognized Prabhas KC as this was his last regular meeting as a Board member. Board members commended Mr. KC for his excellent work as a Board member and wished him luck in his new job and future endeavors.

9. Adjourn

Mr. Coleman moved to adjourn. Mr. Vasington seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:21 PM.