



**FINANCE AND GROWTH COMMITTEE MEETING
By Teleconference**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2022
4:30 PM**

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Ryan Aylesworth, Mario Conjura, Steve Ferrigno, Shamim Patwa, Paul Shapiro (joined at 4:39), Mike Switchenko (by phone)

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

1. Call to Order

Mario Conjura called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. in chair Toni Moran's absence.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Finance and Growth Committee Minutes from February 16, 2022 and April 13, 2022

Ryan Aylesworth made a motion to approve the February 16, 2022 and April 13, 2022 minutes. Shamim Patwa seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Review of March 31, 2022 Financials

Cynthia van Zelm said the Town budget passed at the May 10 Town meeting. It includes \$160,000 for the Partnership's operations – a \$10,000 increase from last year – and \$40,000 for economic development services. There has been no petition so far to take the budget to a referendum. Mr. Aylesworth said the budget was approved by an 85-2 vote.

Ms. van Zelm said the Partnership has received \$14,430 in membership fees, meeting the \$10,000 budget. The Partnership is currently fundraising for events and had some money left over as some of the events were not held last year. The Partnership is actively fundraising for the Celebrate Mansfield Festival and is looking into grants from banks and other businesses.

Ms. van Zelm said net income for parking continues to be strong, at approximately \$103,000. The Partnership is working with the Town Finance Department on year-end close-out.

Mr. Aylesworth made a motion to recommend approval by the full Board, which will have a special meeting on June 1. Mike Switchenko seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Update on Partnership Strategic Action Plan and Downtown Storrs

Ms. van Zelm said the Property Owner/Business Owner Engagement working group met earlier today. The group is focusing on holding a social event to encourage networking among the businesses and thank them for being part of the Downtown. Hops 44 has been proposed as the location of the event, and an invitation will likely be sent out in the next few days. The working group is also trying to determine the best method of communication with the businesses as it is easy for people to be overwhelmed by emails.

Ms. van Zelm said the Promotion/Public Spaces working group met this week and will meet again Monday, May 23. The group is focusing on activating Betsy Paterson Square through the arts and UConn events. Some members of the group will meet with UConn Dean of the School of Fine Arts and incoming Interim Provost Anne D'Alleva to discuss continuing to work with the School of Fine Arts. The group will collaborate with the Arts Advisory Committee as well. Ms. van Zelm added that the Partnership has some funding that can go toward enhancing the Square and other public spaces, and that former Board president Steve Bacon has expressed interest in joining the working group.

Ms. van Zelm said she will provide the Sustainable Funding working group with a list of the Partnership's funding needs. She recently gave the group a list of the donors over the past three years, and Kyle Muncy will follow up on some ideas for potential larger donors. Ms. van Zelm also said she and Downtown Partnership Event Coordinator Denise Kegler have been attending webinars through the Cultural Coalition about finding other resources.

Ms. van Zelm said Streetsense consultant Larisa Ortiz will meet with each of the working groups in July.

Ms. van Zelm said Jefferson Fry Company received its sign approvals and is in the process of moving into the former location of Husky Pizza. She said Jefferson Fry has a few other locations in Connecticut. The owners of other properties in Downtown Storrs have reported increased activity and interest.

Ms. van Zelm said the Summer Stroll will take place the evening of Thursday, May 26. It is intended as a grown-up event, and Downtown Partnership Senior Communications Manager Kathleen Paterson will reach out to the staff of the Mansfield schools.

The Partnership Board's annual meeting will take place at 6:00 p.m. on June 1 in the Innovation Partnership Building, with tours of the building at 4:45 p.m. UConn football coach Jim Mora will be one of the speakers at the annual meeting.

The 17th annual John E. Jackman Tour de Mansfield will take place June 4, with a rain date of June 5. Volunteers are still needed for this event.

Ms. Patwa asked if the development of The Standard at Four Corners will lead to increased competition for Downtown Storrs. Ms. van Zelm said the Economic Development Commission reviewed the project, and the planned commercial development would have approximately the same area as the currently existing Holiday Mall. Steve Ferrigno said the plan for The Standard was driven by the Planning and Zoning Commission's desire for more mixed-use commercial and residential space. He said he has spoken with property owners and leasing agents who see The Standard as having a very different mix of potential uses than Downtown Storrs, as The

Standard would be less walkable and farther from the UConn campus. Ms. van Zelm added that Betsy Paterson Square gives Downtown Storrs a unique feature.

6. Adjourn

Ms. Patwa made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Aylesworth seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

Minutes taken by Joshua Stern