



**Annual/Business Meeting
Special Meeting
Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc.**

Wednesday, June 1, 2022
UConn Tech Park Innovation Partnership Building – Room 317
159 Discovery Drive, Storrs-Mansfield
6:00 PM

DRAFT MINUTES

1) Call to Order and Welcome

Kyle Muncy, Board President, called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

Mr. Muncy asked current and former Board members in attendance to stand and be recognized. He then thanked Dr. Emmanouil Anagnostou for hosting the meeting at the Innovation Partnership Building and for providing tours of the building.

Mr. Muncy thanked the Partnership Board, all businesses and property owners in Downtown Storrs, and all sponsors of and donors to the Downtown's events. He specifically thanked the Town of Mansfield and the University of Connecticut for their resources and financial support. He then thanked all members of the Partnership and recognized its major supporters: Steve Bacon and Anne Bennett, Ruth Buczynski and her business NICABM, Hart Realty Advisers, Oaktree Capital, the Oaks on the Square, People's United Bank – a division of M&T Bank, and Wilcox & Reynolds.

Lastly, Mr. Muncy thanked the Partnership staff: Senior Communications Manager Kathleen Paterson, Event Coordinator Denise Kegler, new Administrative Assistant Joshua Stern, and Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm.

2) Approval of Minutes from June 2, 2021 Annual Meeting

Toni Moran moved to approve the minutes from the June 2, 2021 Annual Meeting as presented.

Diana Pelletier seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved unanimously.

3) Welcome to the Innovation Partnership Building (IPB)

Mr. Muncy introduced Dr. Emmanouil Anagnostou, Interim Executive Director of the UConn Tech Park. Dr. Anagnostou expressed his hopes for increased collaboration between the Tech Park and Downtown Storrs as the Tech Park pursues its next steps of development. He noted that the



Downtown's reputation could serve as a catalyst to build support for smaller innovation-focused companies, including startups and manufacturers.

In response to questions from the audience, Dr. Anagnostou said most of the work done at the UConn Tech Park is from the private industry. It is also a major part of UConn's academic programs, though, with both graduate and undergraduate students often brought there. He said the Tech Park is most closely tied to the School of Engineering but supports the other schools at UConn as well.

4) Remarks from UConn Football Coach Jim Mora

Mr. Muncy introduced Coach Mora as the meeting's guest speaker. Coach Mora spoke about the importance of Downtown Storrs to recruiting and retaining UConn athletes. He said that for the families of the athletes, the Downtown serves as a front gate that represents the area where the players live. When the football program is recruiting, the presence of the Downtown helps demonstrate to the families of potential team members that UConn is a safe environment, with an area within walking distance of campus where students can eat and spend time away from the grind of college. Coach Mora stressed that the Downtown has a direct impact on the football program's success and that the program is always looking to create new partnerships.

In response to questions from the audience, Coach Mora said there have been talks about bringing back the program's Female Football Day event. He noted that UConn's is one of the only Division 1 football programs with a female staff member, offensive analyst Mickey Grace. Coach Mora also spoke about the youth football program and other efforts to connect UConn's players with the broader community.

5) Overview of Downtown Storrs Strategic Action Plan

Mr. Muncy explained that at last year's annual meeting, the Board had recently embarked on a new Downtown Storrs Strategic Action Plan, which was completed earlier this year. He displayed a PowerPoint outlining the major components of the plan.

First, Mr. Muncy discussed the plan's goal of enhancing the private-public realm, noting that events like Summer Stroll and the Celebrate Mansfield Festival show this goal in practice. He mentioned the current effort to add wayfinding and gateway signage to the Downtown, which could benefit the Downtown Storrs businesses by increasing the area's visibility.

Another major goal of the plan is promotion and marketing. Mr. Muncy said the Partnership is focusing on taking advantage of the Downtown's surroundings. In particular, he noted that people coming to UConn for sports events are a major source of patrons of the Downtown, especially when games take place on weekends. Mr. Muncy also expressed hopes to partner with the surrounding towns for more regional programming.

Mr. Muncy then discussed the private realm and tenant mixture. He said there has been focus on the lack of tenants in certain locations in the Downtown, and he acknowledged that the decision to rent property in a certain location is a difficult one. He emphasized the importance of embracing and actively engaging with property owners. In particular, he praised Prabhas KC's efforts with the UConn Student



Consulting Group to help the Partnership learn what students would like to see in the Downtown. Mr. Muncy also said the Partnership is looking for ideas for how to activate empty storefront spaces.

Lastly, Mr. Muncy discussed the Partnership's administrative capacity. He noted that the number of staff members recently increased from three to four, giving Ms. van Zelm more time to get out into the Downtown. He said the Partnership is hoping to create more long-term financial support by encouraging individuals and businesses to contribute larger sponsor packages rather than sponsoring the events individually.

Mr. Muncy mentioned that the Partnership Board has formed three working groups, which will meet in July with Streetsense, the firm that helped the Partnership develop the Strategic Action Plan. He said that with the plan in place, the Partnership needs people to help and potentially serve on the Board and/or the working groups. Frank Gifford added that it has been helpful to receive feedback from business owners about their needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6) Approval of Amendments to the Partnership Bylaws

Mr. Gifford, Chair of the Governance Committee, outlined the proposed changes to the bylaws. The first proposed amendment is to Article V, Section 2 and would add a second student representative to the Board. Mr. Gifford explained that the second student representative would not necessarily need to be a UConn student. He also said the added student representative position would not change the composition of the Board; it would merely increase the maximum number of Board members from fifteen to sixteen.

Mr. Gifford also outlined the proposed amendments to Article VIII, Sections 8 and 10. The changes to Section 8 are intended to clarify the President's duty to fill in for the Executive Director when necessary and make the President a full member of the Governance Committee. The amendment to Section 10 would allow other Directors or staff to take on the Secretary's duties.

Steve Bacon made a motion to approve the amendments to the Partnership bylaws.

Ryan Aylesworth seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

7) Election of Directors to the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc., Board of Directors

Mr. Gifford explained that Ron Schurin had been nominated for an initial one-year term on the Board to finish the term of Amanda Hanzlik. Emily Wicks was nominated for a second three-year term, and Louis Goffinet was nominated for a three-year term.

Mr. Gifford asked for motions from the floor. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to elect Mr. Schurin, Ms. Wicks, and Mr. Goffinet.

Ms. Moran made a motion to elect Ron Schurin to an initial one-year term on the Partnership Board, Emily Wicks to a second three-year term, and Louis Goffinet for a three-year term.

Mr. KC seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

8) A.J. Pappanikou Volunteer of the Year – Sarah Dufresne

Ms. Pelletier recognized Sarah Dufresne for her active volunteer efforts for the Partnership. She noted that Ms. Dufresne initially served as a team leader for the Mansfield Senior Center’s activity booth at the Celebrate Mansfield Festival. Ms. Dufresne has since helped organize crafts for Moonlight Movies and expand Winter Welcome, and currently serves on the Festival committee.

In addition, Ms. Pelletier highlighted Ms. Dufresne’s volunteer work as a member of the Board of Directors of Postpartum Support International of Connecticut. Ms. Dufresne serves as a State Coordinator for this organization and is Chair of the Support Group Committee. She also runs the annual “Climb Out of Darkness” event for this area.

Ms. Pelletier presented Ms. Dufresne with a commemorative plaque. Ms. Dufresne reflected on her time as a student in Mansfield before Downtown Storrs existed. She said the expansion of the Downtown is a key part of what makes Storrs more than just a college town.

9) Recognition of New Downtown Storrs Business of the Year – Fresh Fork Cafe

Steve Ferrigno recognized Fresh Fork Cafe as the inaugural New Downtown Storrs Business of the Year. Fresh Fork opened in July 2021 and is owned by UConn alumni Matt and Shannon Tetreault. Mr. Ferrigno noted that Fresh Fork offers a variety of vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free menu items, including their recently introduced gluten-free donuts. He also said the restaurant offers both dine-in and takeout options, making them a popular choice during the pandemic. Mr. Ferrigno mentioned that in the time the restaurant has been open, Mr. Tetreault and his team have participated in both Mansfield-Willi Restaurant Week and Downtown Storrs Trick or Treat.

As Matt Tetreault was filling in as a chef at Fresh Fork the evening of the meeting, Shannon Tetreault accepted the honor on his behalf. Mr. Ferrigno presented Ms. Tetreault with a commemorative plaque. Ms. Tetreault spoke about how she and Mr. Tetreault met at UConn and often went on dates in the University Plaza building, where Fresh Fork is now located.

10) Honoring Board Member Prabhas KC

Mr. Muncy recognized Mr. KC for his three years of service as the Partnership Board’s UConn student representative. He said Mr. KC took student involvement on the Board and in Downtown Storrs to another level, noting Mr. KC’s excellent attendance record at Board meetings and enthusiastic volunteering at many Partnership events. In addition, Mr. Muncy commended Mr. KC for his leadership as a project manager for the UConn Student Consulting Group, which surveyed students about Downtown Storrs and discussed ways to expand marketing outreach to students.



Mr. Muncy presented Mr. KC with a commemorative gift. Mr. KC reminisced about his early memories of Downtown Storrs, including volunteering for the first time at the Celebrate Mansfield Festival and the many times he begged his parents for frozen yogurt, even during the winter. He remembered the sense of opportunity he felt at the first annual meeting he attended and reflected on how quickly his three years as student representative flew by.

Mr. Muncy said the Partnership needs more people like Mr. KC and Ms. Dufresne. In particular, he asked for help finding more young people to volunteer for the Downtown and help the Partnership develop ideas as the area continues to expand.

11) Adjourn

Ms. Moran moved to adjourn.

Mr. Ferrigno seconded the motion.

The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.