

SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES

Members Present: L. Aldrich, K. Dilaj, B. Lynch, N. McKenney, V. Souter-Kline, L. Watson

Members Absent: Chair S. Ferrigno, A. Raggi

Ex-Officio Members Present: B. Coleman

Ex-Officio Members Absent: A. Moran

Staff Present: R. Aylesworth, Town Manager; C. van Zelm, Executive Director, Mansfield Downtown Partnership

Others Present: None

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Vice-Chair Dilaj called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

New EDC member Brian Lynch, returning members, and staff introduced themselves.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. 3-16-2023 DRAFT Minutes

McKenney MOVED, Aldrich SECONDED to approve the March 16, 2023 Draft Minutes. Motion PASSED unanimously.

B. 5-18-2023 DRAFT Minutes

Souter-Kline MOVED, Aldrich SECONDED to approve the May 18, 2023 Draft Minutes. Motion PASSED with McKenney abstaining and all other members in favor.

4. REPORTS

A. Subcommittee Reports

Van Zelm said the Governance Subcommittee has not officially met since the last EDC meeting, but she and Watson met recently with Lynch to introduce him to the goals of the EDC.

The other two subcommittees have not met since the previous EDC meeting, but members of the Business Support and Outreach Subcommittee have been performing business visits and may report on them at the next EDC meeting, possibly in executive session. McKenney talked about a visit she and EDC chair Steve Ferrigno conducted at Brick Buy Brick.

B. Staff Updates

Van Zelm said the Connecticut's Countryside has published brochures promoting Mansfield, Coventry, Bolton, and Tolland as a region. The hope is to distribute these to visitors' centers, businesses, and other locations throughout the Town. Commission members suggested additional places to distribute

copies, with McKenney also suggesting making posters with QR codes linking to the Connecticut's Countryside website.

Van Zelm said she and Town Communication Specialist Margaret Chatey distributed *the Chronicle's* Summer Fun insert, highlighting activities in Mansfield, to campgrounds and businesses.

C. Business Updates (Openings/Closings)

Van Zelm said Playa Bowls will open in the space in Downtown Storrs formerly occupied by 7-11. Haven Hot Chicken will open in the former location of Wingstop, as will Square Peg Pizzeria in the former Geno's Grille space. Huskies has also signed a lease on the former Grille 86 space. Van Zelm is unsure whether Huskies plans to close their current location, but noted that the businesses on either side of North Eagleville Road will potentially be affected by a proposed multi-family and commercial development on King Hill Road. The developers for this project are scheduled to attend the August EDC meeting, and the Inland Wetlands Agency and Planning and Zoning Commission will hold public hearings on it in August and September.

Aldrich said TaCo has opened near the Eagleville Fire Station.

D. Housing Updates

Van Zelm said the public hearing for Yamei Development's application, discussed at the previous EDC meeting, has been continued to August 7. She sent the minutes of that EDC meeting to the Planning Department for the records of both that and the CMC Storrs application. McKenney noted that construction is well underway for The Standard at Four Corners.

Coleman asked if there have been any updates on the autonomous vehicle test track proposed at the Depot Campus. Van Zelm said the team for the project is still investigating and working out issues with the site.

E. EDC Calendar

There are no significant updates. Van Zelm said the EDC will discuss Winter Welcome at its next meeting, and Dilaj will be meeting on Friday with the Partnership staff to discuss business engagement for this event.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS AT MEETING

A. Amendments to Statute 190-98 of the Mansfield Zoning Regulations to establish a temporary moratorium and limited moratorium on new high density housing developments to March 31, 2024

Van Zelm said the public hearing for this proposal is scheduled for August 7. The moratorium would affect new developments in excess of 5 total units or with an average density greater than 3 units per acre. It includes exceptions for developments with 50% or more of their units reserved for persons 55 and older, as well as potential developments in the PB-4 zone. Applications currently under review would also not be affected.

Members expressed support for the moratorium as it would encourage reflection on what the Town needs in terms of housing and help diversify the Town's housing stock. It was noted that at least four proposed developments are currently going through the application process. McKenney MOVED, Lynch SECONDED for the EDC to submit materials in support of the proposed amendments to Statute 190-98 of the Mansfield Zoning Regulations to establish a temporary moratorium and limited moratorium on new high density housing developments to March 31, 2024. Motion PASSED unanimously.

B. Business Networking Event

Van Zelm said an invitation has been sent out to the EDC members for the Downtown Storrs business networking event the evening of August 16. Town-wide networking events are also being considered by the Business Support and Outreach Subcommittee.

C. Town/UConn Collaboration Update

The Town/UConn framework team has not met since the last EDC meeting.

D. UConn Student Collaboration

Van Zelm said the Partnership staff has been encouraging student groups to reserve Betsy Paterson Square for events like the Husky Hour Student Showcase and Yoga Club meetings. McKenney suggested reaching out to the UConn Rock Ensemble, which has previously performed on the Square. Van Zelm said the Summer Concerts on the Square have been a success and the Moonlight Movies will begin in August.

E. State of Connecticut Cultural District Discussion

Van Zelm said she spoke recently with the staff of the Cultural Coalition about establishing a Cultural District, and the first official meeting is tentatively scheduled for September or October. She noted that a committee with an arts presence, among other criteria, is required to oversee a Cultural District and said it might be possible for this group to be a subcommittee of the EDC.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

All noted.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

B. Future Meeting Topics

Coleman suggested discussing any updates on the autonomous vehicle track at the next meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

McKenney MOVED, Lynch SECONDED to adjourn. Motion PASSED unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Joshua Stern
Administrative Assistant
Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc.