

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present: Chair S. Ferrigno, L. Aldrich, N. McKenney, V. Souter-Kline (joined meeting at 6:04 p.m.), L. Watson

Members Absent: K. Dilaj, 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; J. Stern, Administrative Assistant, Mansfield Downtown Partnership

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Ferrigno called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

McKenney MOVED, Souter-Kline SECONDED to approve the June 16, 2022 minutes as presented. Motion PASSED unanimously.

4. REPORTS

A. MEMBER UPDATES

No report.

B. Staff Updates

Van Zelm said all of her updates will be covered under other agenda items.

C. Business Updates (Openings/Closings)

Ferrigno said Chase Bank is in the process of moving into the former location of Jamba Juice and Bruegger's Bagels. Van Zelm said she thinks Chase is expected to open in November and that Jefferson Fry Company is expected to open in the next few weeks.

Stern noted that Gramma's Comfort Foods had closed permanently since the last EDC meeting. He and van Zelm said they were unsure whether Alex Salustri had sold Chiropractic Health Center.

D. Housing Updates

Van Zelm said she had forwarded the Commission a memo from Acting Director of Planning and Development Jennifer Kaufman. The memo noted that the proposed regulations for the Mixed-Use Center-Transitional zoning district were approved and will go into effect August 15. The developer who pursued this regulation change hopes to develop the property across from where The Standard will be.

Van Zelm also noted from the memo that the Inland Wetlands Agency received an application for development of an area near TOAST, Hops 44, the gas station, and The Standard. The development would consist of retail/restaurant space as well as apartments. The IWA has hired Land Tech to peer-

review the proposed project, which is expected to go to public hearing September 6. In addition, Blue Waters LLC has applied to open a retail and drive-through location of Domino's at the former site of the Subway regional headquarters at Four Corners; the public hearing is continued to August 1.

Van Zelm also noted from the memo that results have been received from a survey that was sent out to Mansfield residents about cannabis establishments. The Planning & Zoning Commission's Regulatory Review Committee met to review the survey results and is in the process of scheduling a joint meeting about the results with the Town Council.

Van Zelm also noted from the memo that on June 27, the Town Council authorized Aylesworth to execute an amended sewer service agreement between the Town and UConn. It is expected that the Town will continue to receive applications for development in the sewer service area.

Ferrigno asked if the application the IWA is reviewing is a new application or a resubmittal of a previous one. Aylesworth outlined the most important changes made to the sewer agreement. In response to a question from Ferrigno, Aylesworth said the new agreement should help facilitate planned developments on King Hill Road and in the Downtown.

E. EDC Calendar

There are no significant updates.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS AT MEETING

A. Business Networking Event – Next Steps

Ferrigno said the Downtown Partnership's networking event on June 22 at Hops 44 was well attended and received. He asked if the EDC would like to collaborate with the Partnership on similar events and/or expand them to include businesses not in the Downtown Storrs area. Coleman said he thinks at least the next networking event should remain focused on the Downtown. McKenney differed, saying the events should include businesses at Four Corners and other parts of Mansfield.

Ferrigno said the Commission will likely continue to discuss future networking events at the next few meetings. McKenney said she thinks at least 35 to 40 people attended the event in June.

B. Follow-Up on Co-Working Space – Tour Dates for West Hartford Coworking; Overview of Co-Working Spaces in CT

Stern said he has been in touch with Annisa Teich from West Hartford Coworking to organize a tour of that space for the EDC. Several members said September would likely be the best time for a tour.

Stern briefly outlined the memo he had prepared overviews co-working spaces in Connecticut, saying he included information about membership fees and amenities at various locations. In response to a question from the last meeting about whether students would use a co-working space, he noted that West Hartford Coworking offers a student membership plan and has an academic advisor on its staff.

In response to a question from Aldrich, Stern clarified that the Goodwin and Vinton school buildings had briefly been mentioned as possible locations for co-working spaces once the new elementary school is built, but nothing is definite yet. Ferrigno said any co-working space would be run by a private entity, not the Town. He raised the idea of proposing available commercial spaces in Downtown Storrs or Four Corners to any developers who might be interested in opening co-working spaces.

C. Update on American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Local Business Relief Fund Program

Van Zelm said about 24 applications for funding were received. The advisory group consisting of her, Aylesworth, and Finance Director Charmaine Bradshaw-Hill is still reviewing the applications but hopes

to respond to applicants in the next week. Van Zelm also plans to follow up soon with the businesses that submitted incomplete applications.

In response to a question from Ferrigno, van Zelm said \$370,000 of the Town's ARPA funding was allocated for local business relief. Coleman and Souter-Kline asked if the possibility of expanding the program, possibly to nonprofits, had been discussed. Van Zelm said it was discussed briefly and Aylesworth plans to discuss it further with the Town Council.

D. Subcommittee Updates

None of the subcommittees had met since the previous EDC meeting.

E. Town/UConn Collaboration Update

The recent renegotiation of the sewer agreement was discussed under item 4D, Housing Updates.

Ferrigno also mentioned that UConn is in discussions with a developer who has proposed an autonomous vehicle test track on the Depot Campus. Coleman asked how much space the track would occupy and if any buildings would need to be razed. Van Zelm said the land would be purchased for \$5 million and would consist of 105 acres; the Depot Campus is 226 acres. She does not know whether any buildings would need to come down. She added that developer Steve Cortese got the idea for an autonomous test track at an event for developers and realtors that the Town and the Partnership hosted in coordination with AdvanceCT.

F. Promotion of Arts in Mansfield

Ferrigno said he and Coleman met recently to brainstorm ideas for events promoting the arts. He said Coleman reached out to the Arts Advisory Committee and the two of them will attend the Committee's meeting in September. Coleman said he is envisioning a regional arts show and would also like to collaborate with the UConn School of Fine Arts. Van Zelm said the Partnership is continuing to work with the School of Fine Arts on the possibility of using empty spaces in the Downtown as gallery space.

Aldrich noted that an event where artists display or sell their work could also feature musicians or activities for children and families.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

All noted.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 18, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

B. Future Meeting Topics

No future meeting topics were discussed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

McKenney MOVED, Souter-Kline SECONDED to adjourn. Motion PASSED unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

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