

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: A. Moran, C. Workman, P. Aho, J. Armstrong, R. Aylesworth, M. Gilbert, L. Forand

Staff: L. Painter, C. van Zelm, M. Chatey

Guests: Sgt. S. King, R. Miller

Absent: V. Lorenz, E. Holinko, S. Vasington

The meeting was called to order by Chair T. Moran at 1:05 PM

1. Public Comment

No public comment.

2. Meeting Minutes

J. Armstrong moved the draft minutes for August 10, 2021 be approved, seconded by P. Aho. Minutes approved with one abstention.

3. Updates

C. Workman introduced Lily Forand as the new student government representative on this committee.

- a. *Appreciation for Committee Member David Freudmann.* The committee will speak about this at another time in respect for the wishes of Mr. Freudmann's family.
- b. *Framework for Development.* Next meeting of the joint committee with UConn and Town of Mansfield is October 14. T. Moran acknowledged the positive development of this committee. C. Workman described the goal is to agree to shared goals, establish process and identify future projects for collaboration and to be transparent about shared challenges. UConn's Chief Financial Officer, Government Relations team, Planning and Design representatives have been invited to participate, and others will join as needed. The scope will extend beyond housing needs. Meeting frequency will likely be monthly. R. Aylesworth agreed that the group will share aspirational goals for high-level planning plus individual projects, and will emphasize establishing open and honest communication.
- c. *Economic Development.* C. van Zelm reported that the Explore our Town Guide has been distributed to Eastern Connecticut manufacturing companies to share with their employees. The Town is exhibiting at the Work/Life Expo at UConn to

promote local services to UConn employees. Gateway signage is being installed at the northern and southern entrances to Mansfield. The comprehensive town-wide signage plan proposal process yielded six responses from firms that will now be reviewed for selection.

- d. *Opportunity Zone.* The Four-Town Vitality committee is working with the Capital Area Council of Governments, The Last Green Valley, and the Small Business Development Center to minimize duplication of efforts. The parcel book in development with AdvanceCT is moving forward.
- e. *Mansfield Downtown Partnership.* Public presentation of the first phase of the strategic plan was presented by Street Sense to 40 participants. A survey is also available at mdp.org/plan until October 27. The 18th Celebrate Mansfield Festival saw robust turnout, and 166 volunteers assisted, mostly UConn students. Van Zelm credited the university for that robust support. Halloween Trick or Treat will take place on October 30.

T. Moran proposed that item 6 be moved up in the agenda.

6. Town COVID-19 Update. R. Miller reported that Celebrate Mansfield was successful for Eastern Highlands Health District, offering a menu of COVID vaccines and flu shots; 45 pediatric flu, 45 adult flu and 5 doses of COVID vaccine were administered, the largest clinic for EHHD since June. Positive COVID results are trending down with less than 5 cases per 100,000, deemed “substantial” by CDC standards. EHHD estimates 79% coverage for first dose, and 77% of total population fully vaccinated in Mansfield vs. 65% statewide. State data reports on the website does not represent Mansfield accurately due to UConn students getting their COVID vaccinations in their hometowns. T. Moran credited UConn for its aggressive stance with vaccines for students and staff, therefore minimizing positive cases in Mansfield. EHHD partnered with UConn in supplying vaccines as students returned, but most students were vaccinated before returning. COVID testing is less accessible locally now, but the EHHD website provides current listings of testing locations. Pharmacies are also testing sites, by appointment. T. Moran asked if this committee should meet remotely, and R. Miller advised that more time be allowed before meeting in person with winter approaching. M. Gilbert reported that Student Health Center is providing flu shots, and encourages students to obtain a shot. Just a few students have tested positive for COVID, and are being quarantined on campus.

Updates (Resuming Item 3)

- f. *Planning and Development.* L. Painter updated the committee on state Cannabis regulations, seeking framework feedback for the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC). Cannabis is not listed as an agricultural crop, each community is allowed one retailer, and there is no limit to the number of micro-cultivators. PZC plans to visit production facilities to better understand the potential impact of growing cannabis. L. Painter outlined the regions of town where growing or retailing cannabis might be appropriate, and special permits will be required. Cannabis-related businesses will be prohibited within home occupations. There is no limit to the number of hybrid producers in a town. P. Aho reported that PZC’s

inclination is to allow retail, but prohibit production of cannabis. UConn is conducting research on marijuana. C. Workman will check in with UConn to determine the university's point of view as state and local laws evolve, and this topic warrants an ongoing discussion.

- g. *CT Murals-MLK Mural Project.* T. Moran reported Mansfield hosted a community paint day, and UConn's paint day is scheduled for October 13. R. Aylesworth shared the unveiling target date is November 1. On the fundraising, the mural is at \$4,500 of the \$5,000 goal, and he asked that if UConn intends to support the mural financially using the crowd-sourcing site would be advantageous toward obtaining the match.

4. UConn Construction Updates. No updates.

- 5. **UConn Housing Update.** C. Workman reported that the new 600-bed, suite-style dormitory on South Campus facing Gilbert Road will begin construction in fall of 2022, completing the quad. M. Gilbert reported that the master plan shows adding new housing stock so older buildings may then be replaced with new construction. The intent is not to increase enrollment, but to upgrade housing stock. The Mansfield Apartments complex design process was approved by the UConn Board of Trustees. Proposed plan details will be presented as is appropriate. T. Moran asked if it is known what percentage of graduate students come with families because it has an impact on Mansfield's school population and low-income apartment capacity.

7. Other Business.

- a. *How to engage students to frequent Downtown Storrs.* J. Armstrong reported that his office promotes visitation downtown including in weekly newsletters and promoting the Celebrate event. Plans for an incentive program were underway before COVID-19. T. Moran pointed out that UConn official entities have access to the stage approximately 28% of the time, available for university performances. Live performances have a positive impact on the Downtown. C. van Zelm said there are plans to run shuttle buses again during highly attended basketball games.
- b. *Joint Afghan Refugee Resettlement Efforts.* R. Aylesworth reported that Mansfield is trying to focus on providing services the Town is equipped to provide, and this is a priority with the Town Council. T. Moran acknowledged that UConn's approach to this is comprehensive, and Kathryn Libal is a valuable resource for these efforts. There has been outreach to the Oaks Apartments about available units.
- c. *Voting.* L. Forand announced that Student Government is hosting a voter registration drive planned for students along Fairfield Way on October 20 and 27

from 1 to 3 PM. T. Moran suggested that Ms Forand contact the Registrars of Voters in Mansfield for support.

- d. *Collaboration on Issues Related to Race.* T. Moran reported that there was an incident at the Celebrate Mansfield Festival involving young teens and a UConn student, and steps were taken to reassure the person who was the victim of the incident. J. Armstrong suggested the group refer to UConn's Bias Protocol.

8. Future Agenda Items. None identified.

- P. Aho motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:27 PM, seconded by C. Workman. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Margaret Chatey
Administrator to the Committee

Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 1:00 PM