

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: A. Moran, C. Workman, P. Aho, J. Armstrong, R. Aylesworth, M. Gilbert, E. Holinko, V. Lorenz, S. Vasington

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

Guests: Resident State Trooper's Office: Sgt. S. King,
Eastern Highlands Health District: R. Miller

Absent: L. Forand

Chair Workman called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM

1. Public Comment

R. Aylesworth read emails into the record from Alison Hilding asking for a crosswalk on North Eagleville Road near Discovery Drive and improvement to signage there. R. Aylesworth asked which office at UConn is best for directing these types of concerns, and C. Workman suggested the President's office. T. Moran moved, seconded by P. Aho, to address this communication under item 6B Other Business-Pedestrian Safety and the committee approved.

2. Meeting Minutes

P. Aho moved the draft minutes for October 12, 2021 be approved, seconded by T. Moran. Minutes approved with one abstention.

3. Updates

- a. *Appreciation for Committee Member David Freudmann.* T. Moran offered recognition and expressed appreciation for Town Council and Town-University Relations committee member Mr. Freudmann who passed suddenly, offering that the community will miss his influence and outstanding contributions. No replacement representative from Town Council has yet been assigned. C. Workman noted that he helped the committee to evaluate process, systems and transparency, contributing greatly to the dynamism of this committee's meetings.
- b. *Framework for Development.* C. Workman reported that Interim President Dr. Agwunobi and Mayor Moran have both been attending meetings regularly. Economic Development and future issues have been the focus of sessions. R. Aylesworth acknowledged the meetings have been productive focusing on scope

of projects and funding collaborations, but expressed there is a need to revisit establishing institutional apparatus and process. C. Workman suggested she and R. Aylesworth collaborate to create a draft of the framework to submit to the full group. C. Workman added that the sewer agreement is one topic that is being discussed, but the agreement touches on a complex set of issues.

- c. *Economic Development.* C. van Zelm reported that the two gateway signs are installed. The Town has hired consultant Merje to create the town-wide signage plan. Stakeholder interviews and site visits will kick off the 10-month plan process. A current focus for economic development is reorganizing the website with business resources content, and establishing priorities for 2022.
- d. *Opportunity Zone.* The Four-Town Economic Vitality team has applied for a FEMA grant for staff funding, with possible involvement by UConn students. The parcel book in development with AdvanceCT is moving forward. C. Workman also reported that a plan is underway to connect UConn's business-support resources with small businesses in the region targeting spring programs.
- e. *Mansfield Downtown Partnership.* C. van Zelm reported that MDP has reviewed the 3-year strategic plan, and is focusing on its priorities for year 1. A meeting with the two major property owners within Downtown Storrs will take place to share the overall plan. Winter Welcome event December 2 was successful. P. Aho asked if the sale of the Educational Playcare property in Downtown Storrs has any impact, and C. van Zelm will follow up with the executive director to determine if there will be noteworthy changes.
- f. *Planning and Development Update.* L. Painter reported that Mansfield and UConn are collaborating on a Community Challenge grant application to benefit the South Eagleville corridor. The grant could provide gap financing for the Eagleville Green project, including sewer improvements, plus pedestrian safety improvements. A 50% match is required, and the non-profit is seeking American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. An application is pending for a 398-unit mixed-use development at Four Corners. The redevelopment of the former golf course is in the review phase. Mansfield is exploring expansion of its food programs under the Connecticut Small Cities Block Grant to neighboring communities. Department is trying to refine its food provision system and is seeking a vendor to support the program. E. Holinko followed up on the Eagleville Green and inquired if the match is in dollars. He also asked whether Planning has done any cost averaging for the 42-unit project, and what the cost will be to the Town.
- g. *MLK Mural Project.* R. Aylesworth reported that the unveiling took place on November 13 with about 150 people in attendance. It was a successful collaboration with fundraising and creative input yielding noteworthy public art.

4. UConn Construction Updates

S. Vasington reported on the four significant construction projects on campus that are ongoing this winter and spring: public safety, northwest science and supplemental utility plant, the central utility plant, and new hockey arena seating about 2400 people. New South Residence Hall and improvements to Mirror Lake will be the next significant

activities in 2022. P. Aho asked about the timing of the Mansfield Apartments on South Eagleville Road, but S. Vasington is not certain of the timing.

5. Town COVID-19 Update

R. Miller reported that there is a surge in COVID cases statewide, with Mansfield experiencing 73 cases over the past two weeks ending December 4, and 13 are UConn students. UConn reports that nine residential students were in isolation with 53 total positive cases, and a third of these cases are among unvaccinated students. Eastern Highlands Health District is staging local pediatric vaccination clinics, and 36% of Mansfield children ages 5-11 have received at least one dose. EHHD and UConn are planning booster clinics for UConn students after the winter break. S. Vasington asked if the Town Hall clinics accept walk-ins and R. Miller responded that all require registration with VAMS.

6. Other Business.

- a. *Approval of 2022 Meeting Schedule.* P. Aho moved and T. Moran seconded motion to approve the 2022 schedule as presented, and the committee voted to approve.
- b. *Pedestrian Safety.* T. Moran summarized that she and Dr. Agwunobi are co-signing a letter to the Department of Transportation about pedestrian concerns on 195 and South Eagleville Road near campus urging action be taken immediately. The Rte.195 sidewalk project between Four Corners and campus has been cut from the federal Transportation Bill, but Congressman Courtney is assuring the Town that his office is seeking additional sources for funding that \$3 million project. S. Vasington pointed out that the southern access to campus along Rte. 195 is another area that needs addressing with high use by students. He urged that the Pedestrian Safety Commission request sidewalks also be installed beyond Liberty Bank along Rte. 195. P. Aho raised that South Eagleville Road would benefit from traffic speed suppression through speed limit enforcement and installation of a traffic-calming island. E. Holinko suggested the sidewalk be extended to the end of South Eagleville Rd to Rte 32. Traffic arrows installed at Rte. 44 and 32 would be beneficial. S. Vasington reported that DOT is designing a traffic signal plan at Separatist and South Eagleville Roads. He also supports the concept of pedestrian refuge islands. Roundabout study groups with the Capital Region of Governments are considering two of these intersections to mitigate the traffic issues raised here. Sgt. King acknowledged that officers are increasing their speed enforcement efforts in areas where residents express concern about speeding, and where accidents occur. C. Workman asked about the Town Council's strategy approaching the State about issues on Mansfield roads that are under state jurisdiction.

Related to Ms Hilding's communication, S. Vasington will share the concern with the Pedestrian Safety Advisory group at UConn. The group also works with Mansfield's Traffic Authority. The intersection of King Hill Road and North Eagleville is an active project permitted with DOT and is being addressed with

improved technologies and pedestrian pedestals, which will be completed by August 2022.

- c. *How to engage students to frequent Downtown Storrs.* C. Workman reported she and the student representative to MDP are working on ways to boost student traffic in Downtown Storrs. Under consideration is how student groups might utilize the Paterson Square as a site for more activities, and how to provide more entertainment opportunities there.
- d. *Joint Afghan Refugee Resettlement Efforts.* R. Aylesworth reported that IRIS did not have specific needs for immediate family resettlement when Mansfield inquired. There may be availability of housing at The Oaks if needed, and that has been communicated to IRIS.
- e. *Collaboration on Issues Related to Race.* T. Moran reported that she is aware of two organizations in town that are hosting conversations to address racism. The Human Rights Commission is seeking funding to host four panel events on attitudes toward race and related human rights subjects. Conversations on Racism (COR-Mansfield) is also a forum for initiating positive change. This will not continue as a future agenda item until called for.

7. Future Agenda Items.

E. Holinko asked that parking issues be discussed. R. Aylesworth suggested a subcommittee might address parking issues and potential improvements, then bring it to this committee.

P. Aho suggested the committee discuss the presence of the Graduate Hotel, renting from UConn, and its ongoing noise issue affecting close-by residents.

R. Aylesworth motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:27 PM, seconded by P. Aho. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Margaret Chatey
Administrator to the Committee

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 1:00 PM