

MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
Tuesday, February 7, 2006

MINUTES

Present: Stephen Bacon, Martin Berliner, Tom Callahan, Bruce Clouette, Mike Gergler, Al Hawkins, Janet Jones, Philip Lodewick, Peter Nicholls, Betsy Paterson, Dave Pepin, Phil Spak, David Woods

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

Guest: Macon Toledano

1. Call to Order

Philip Lodewick called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

2. Opportunity for Public to Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

Bruce Clouette made a motion to approve the minutes. Mike Gergler seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Director's Report

Cynthia van Zelm said a follow-up branding session had been held with MilesBrand, members of the LeylandAlliance team, members of the community, and members of the Partnership Board. The Storrs Center logo and tagline "Rethink Main Street" was unveiled and she passed out information prepared by MilesBrand on the work done to put together the logo.

Mr. Lodewick said he thought MilesBrand did a good job with articulating where we are in terms of a vision for Storrs Center. The tagline "Rethink Main Street" makes you want to see what is going on in Mansfield.

Bruce Clouette said he attended the follow-up branding session and that he thought the MilesBrand team gave an excellent and succinct presentation.

Ms. van Zelm said the first open house went very well with about 30 people in attendance.

She also reported that interviews had started for the Administrative Assistant position.

5. Update on Storrs Center Project and Next Steps Including DRAFT Schedule

Ms. van Zelm passed out a draft schedule for the next steps of the Storrs Center project. As previously passed on, the Municipal Development Plan was approved by the CT Department of Economic and Community Development on January 27.

Mr. Toledano said the next step is to work on the special design district approval process. This is comprised of two components: creating the special design district zoning regulation, and rezoning the Storrs Center project area to a special design district. The team is preparing a proposal for Greg Padick, Mansfield Planning Director, to review. A work session may be held with the Planning and Zoning Commission before formal submittal. Mr. Toledano said the goal is to have these changes approved by this summer.

Mr. Toledano said that there would have to be a rezoning to accommodate the new building on Dog Lane (for many of the relocated businesses). He said the team is hoping to have an application into the Planning and Zoning Commission in the next month.

Concurrently, the team will be looking to secure permits from the State Traffic Commission, the CT Department of Environmental Protection, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. A local inlands wetland permit will be required as well. All these permits need to be in place before any building permits are secured. The goal is to have the master engineering approvals in place by the fall of 2006. Once the special design district and the permits are in place, the site plan applications can be submitted to the Town Planning Director and the Partnership for approval. When site plans are approved, the team will apply for a building permit. There will be some construction permits for basic site work that will be needed after site plans are approved.

The goal is to start construction on the Dog Lane building this fall with it ideally being ready late in 2006. Hopefully, people could move in during the UConn semester break. The demolition of buildings for Phase One would start after the move into the building on Dog Lane. Mr. Toledano noted that much of the schedule is dependent on the timeline with respect to relocation. The goal is to start construction of the buildings for Phase One in March 2007.

Mr. Toledano said while the proposed zoning regulation changes are being done, the design guidelines are also being wrapped up. He said the goal is to have the design guideline review process in place when the zoning changes are completed.

Dave Pepin asked if Phases One and Two would take four years. Mr. Toledano said this was not necessarily the case; there will be some overlap. The overall build-out for the entire project is 5 to 8 years. Mr. Toledano said much is contingent on the timeline for zoning changes.

Tom Callahan summarized the critical next steps as approval of the special design district, pinning down the resources for relocation, and completed construction of the building on Dog Lane (Building 1A). Mr. Toledano would add securing funding for the municipal parking garage as another critical step. The garage is needed early on in the project to accommodate the commercial and housing uses.

Mr. Callahan asked if having the UConn Nayden Health Clinic relocated by the end of 2006 would work in the timeline for Storrs Center? Mr. Toledano replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Toledano advocated a letter writing campaign to the CT federal legislators to show support for the parking garage, which is already underway. Betsy Paterson urged Board members to write letters reiterating that the project will create jobs and the project benefits the state. Mr. Lodewick also noted that it is important to have regional leaders and supporters to write letters or talk to our federal and state legislators as well.

Ms. Paterson said meetings are being scheduled with Congressman Simmons, Senator Dodd and Senator Lieberman and/or their staff in DC and Connecticut. She was also following up with State Representative Denise Merrill and State Senator Don Williams on the request at the state for an Urban Action Grant, which includes funding for the garage. Ms. Paterson said another important point is that the request for public funding is only 12 percent of the total project cost.

Ms. Paterson said one of the selling points is to push that the Storrs Center project is a partnership, not just a Town or UConn project.

Bruce Clouette asked how much the Town and UConn have put into the project. Ms. van Zelm said she will check the numbers and get back to the Board.

6. Executive Director Evaluation

Mr. Lodewick said that Ms. van Zelm was entering her fourth year as Executive Director of the Partnership. He passed out performance evaluation sheets and asked Board members to fill them out and fax them back to him. Ms. van Zelm will schedule an Executive Committee meeting for the first step in her review.

7. Review and Approval of FY2006-2007 Budget

Mr. Callahan said the Finance and Administration Committee had met two weeks ago and reviewed next year's budget. He said the main revenues were from UConn and the Town. The amount budgeted for membership is conservative. Mr. Callahan noted that expenditures had not changed much. Ms. van Zelm said there would be some savings from having the Administrative Assistant position open for a few months. She also noted that electricity costs were estimated to go up 20 percent.

Mr. Callahan noted that this was a lean budget and that the Partnership was a lean organization.

Mr. Callahan made a motion to approve the FY2006-2007 Partnership budget. Betsy Paterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. Report from Committees

Advertising and Promotion

Dean Woods said the Advertising and Promotion Committee had discussed the Partnership newsletter and the brick promotional idea again at its latest meeting. He said there were plans for a bike tour on June 24 and that the Partnership and the Town would be working together on this initiative.

Dean Woods said the Committee also talked about activities around groundbreaking. He said that the School of Fine Arts could be involved in providing entertainment around the groundbreaking.

Bruce Clouette asked about the status of placing signage in the vacant windows of the Store 24 building to promote the Storrs Center project. Ms. van Zelm said she was still working on this project.

Business Development and Retention

Mike Gergler said the Business Development and Retention Committee was waiting for more information on the Dog Lane/1A building before a meeting is scheduled with the business owners in March. He noted that all the Committee members attended the meeting with business owners in January. He also said that in the last 6 weeks, he has heard from 6 businesses that are interested in office space in the new development. **Mr. Gergler will pass on the names to Ms. van Zelm for the database.**

Festival on the Green

Ms. Paterson said the Festival on the Green Committee had started to meet again. The two problem areas in the past have been with art and food. She said the Committee brainstormed a new idea around art whereby art would be

displayed in a large tent with tablecloths and floral arrangements. The emphasis would be on displays vs. selling art.

With respect to food, she said the plan was to solicit some non-profits to participate such as the Boy Scouts, Greek Center, churches, etc. to see if they also would want to do this as a fundraiser. Ms. Paterson said one of the criticisms has been that there has not been enough food.

The tentative date for the Festival is September 17 from 12 pm to 5 pm.

Ms. Paterson said the School of Fine Arts will be asked to participate again. Most of the attendees are families/not too many UConn students attend but they have been vitally important as volunteers.

Planning and Design

Steve Bacon said the Planning and Design Committee has been continuing to work on the process and its role of monitoring the design guidelines. One of the issues is how to do this with a committee that meets once a month. Ms. van Zelm said she hopes the design guidelines will be completed this spring.

Nominating Committee

Mr. Lodewick said the Nominating Committee met prior to the Board meeting and reviewed the largely small changes to the Bylaws as had been proposed by Partnership attorney Lee Cole-Chu last March. Mr. Lodewick hopes to bring the changes to the Board at its next meeting and then to the general membership at the Annual Meeting.

9. Communications

Ms. van Zelm noted that the USDA grant was being closed out. (It was largely used for the design guidelines/see final letter in packet)

10. Other

Mr. Lodewick said he would like to push the Annual Meeting back a week as he will be out of town. Ms. Paterson made a motion to move the Annual Meeting date to June 13 at 6 pm. Mr. Clouette seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

11. Adjourn

Tom Callahan made a motion to adjourn at 4:50 pm. Ms. Paterson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting notes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.

