

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
January 10, 2007**

MINUTES

Present: Stephen Bacon, Thomas Callahan, Bruce Clouette, Dianne Doyle, Michael Gergler, Barry Feldman, Matt Hart, Al Hawkins, Philip Lodewick, Dave Pepin, Steve Rogers, Phil Spak, Betsy Treiber, Frank Vasington, David Woods

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Lee Cole-Chu

Guests: Tom Cody, Geoff Fitzgerald, 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

Dave Pepin made a motion to approve the minutes. Mike Gergler seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Director's Report

Cynthia van Zelm introduced Becca Powell, a senior at UConn, who is interning in the Partnership office for 8 hours a week until late April.

Ms. van Zelm passed out brochures of the Winter Fun Day scheduled for Sunday, February 11 from 1 pm to 5 pm at the Community Center.

Ms. van Zelm reminded the Board that the February Board meeting would be largely dedicated to the Partnership strategic planning session with the business part of the Board meeting beginning at 3 pm and the strategic planning session running until 3:30 pm and ending at approximately 7:30 pm. Steve Rogers will be providing Subway sandwiches.

Ms. van Zelm asked the Board to hold the dates of January 31 and February 14 at 4 pm for a potential Board meeting to review the map amendment for the

Special Design District. Meetings of the Planning and Design Committee are tentatively scheduled the evenings before to seek the Committee's approval first.

Ms. van Zelm said that she, Mayor Paterson, Board President Philip Lodewick, and Macon Toledano were scheduled to fly to Washington, DC on Jan. 24 to meet with Senators Lieberman and Dodd, and Congressman Courtney and/or their staff to request funding for the parking garage.

Betsy Paterson said she had been following up with State Senator Don Williams and State Representative Denise Merrill on the state request for funding for the garage.

5. **Update on Storrs Center Project and Next Steps**

Tom Cody, attorney for LeylandAlliance, reviewed the status of the text amendment for a special design district to be submitted by the Partnership and LeylandAlliance to the Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). *The draft text amendment had been e-mailed to Board members.*

Mr. Cody said the goal is to make sure the Board is very familiar with the text amendment. He said the team is very close to submitting it to the Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC).

The text amendment creates the process by which properties are re-zoned.

At the last Board meeting, he reviewed with others on the team the five elements of the map amendment for the special design district: storm water plan, parking plan, traffic study, design guidelines, and the maps.

After the property is re-zoned, detailed plans have to be submitted to the Director of Planning in the Town of Mansfield. The application is then referred back to the Partnership Board to hold a public meeting on those site plans. Those site plans must be consistent with the zoning regulations and the studies (mentioned above). The Director of Planning will refer the site plans out to Town staff for their review as well. If the Director of Planning reaches a favorable review after the Partnership holds its public hearing, a zoning permit is approved. The next step is a building permit. And, local, state, and federal permits will have to be obtained. This process is outlined in the text amendment and must be approved by the PZC.

Last night, the text amendment draft was presented to the Planning and Design Committee and they recommended that it be approved by the full Board, with some clarifications.

One of the clarifications relates to signage. Current signage does not address a compact mixed-use village. It is proposed that the design guidelines, which will be part of the map amendment, address signage rather than a lot of detail in the

text amendment. The dimensions and definition of blade and sandwich board signs will be addressed. In response to a question from Bruce Clouette, Mr. Cody said that certain signs are not permitted in the current zoning regulations.

Tom Callahan asked Steve Bacon what the Planning and Design Committee's reaction was last night to the draft text amendment. Mr. Bacon said the Committee met last night and heard a similar presentation by Mr. Cody. With the above-mentioned changes, the Committee adopted a unanimous motion to recommend the text amendment to the Board for approval. Eight Committee members were present along with one on the phone. There was some discussion on the definition of boarding house and whether it was needed as an allowed use. After clarifying that it is an allowed use in a Planned Residential zoning district already, the Committee made no change to delete it from the list of allowable uses in the draft text amendment. Mr. Cody explained that a boarding house is defined as a dwelling unit where at least four unrelated persons reside. Mr. Cody said he recommended keeping it as an allowable use as it allows for more flexibility.

Greg Padick, Mansfield Planning Director, said that in Town no space has ever been defined as a boarding house. A boarding house would be where a person could rent a room, and a kitchen is not needed. Under the current zoning regulations, a special permit is required if someone wants to build a boarding house. There are no size requirements but it must meet building code requirements.

Frank Vasington asked Mr. Bacon for more context for the Committee's boarding house discussion. Mr. Bacon said he believed that most Committee members had no real reference to a boarding house except their own experience. It did not seem to fit in with the style type envisioned in downtown. After the definition of boarding house, as defined by the Mansfield zoning regulations, was read, the Committee realized it was not a new term.

Mr. Toledano said that the challenge is trying to define a mixed-use district where none exists. His belief is that a boarding house could be an executive retreat center, co-housing, or a place for visiting professors.

Mr. Bacon clarified that boarding house as a use will stay in the text amendment package.

Mr. Cody said that statutorily, the PZC needs to wait 35 days to schedule a public hearing. He said the Leyland team would prefer that the hearings on the text amendment and the map amendment are not held too far apart. If the applications are submitted by early to mid-February, the hope is that public hearings could be scheduled in March.

Bruce Clouette asked if the PZC refers the applications to the Town Council on an informal basis. Mr. Padick (sitting in the audience) replied in the affirmative. Mr. Clouette asked if the PZC can discuss the applications before the public hearing, and Mr. Padick replied in the negative. Mr. Cody confirmed that the PZC cannot have discussions with the applicant before the public hearing.

Mr. Cody said the PZC has 65 days to deliberate on an application after the public hearing.

Dave Pepin asked if the PZC can ask questions of the applicant before or after the public hearing. Mr. Cody said input can be sought from Town staff but not from the applicant.

In response to a series of questions about process, Mr. Padick said the PZC can modify and approve an application but modifications are limited. Typically, a motion is drafted after the public hearing with respect to action on the application. Applications can be withdrawn. Applications that are denied can be resubmitted within a certain time period. Mr. Toledano said the team is working on language with respect to modifications.

With respect to the proposed role of the Planning Director approving site plans following a Partnership public hearing (laid out in the text amendment), Mr. Cody said the goal is to give the PZC much more information than they would typically receive in a zone change application. In particular, the design guidelines greatly exceed what a commission would typically receive at this stage. The hope is that the PZC will feel comfortable with this amount of information.

Mr. Clouette asked if it was fair to say that the designation of review of site plans by staff was fairly typical in urban/more dense centers. Mr. Cody replied in the affirmative. Mr. Cody said some cities in Connecticut do not have zone changes go their respective commissions, but rather to staff.

There was some discussion and question about a public session on the text and map amendment before submittal to the PZC. The conclusion was that the project is now at a stage where the PZC is the right venue/forum for further public discussion. There will be the opportunity for the public to comment during the public hearings that the PZC will hold. The Partnership has maintained its open houses and had a presentation on some of the design elements last October for its membership, continuing the Partnership's efforts to inform the public about the Storrs Center project. It will be important to make sure that people know when the applications are submitted and have a copy available in the Partnership office.

Steve Bacon made a motion that based on Partnership Board review, and minor modifications to the text amendment by the Planning and Design Committee, the Board submit the text amendment application, as co-applicant with

LeylandAlliance, to the Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission, and that the Partnership Executive Director be authorized to make minor modifications as the Executive Director sees fit for the purposes of supporting the application. Dave Pepin seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Report from Committees

Finance and Administration

Mr. Callahan reminded Board members of the strategic planning session at the next Board meeting on Feb. 6.

Mr. Callahan said that he, Betsy Paterson, Matt Hart, and Philip Lodewick had met on the Partnership's budget. There will be growth in two areas: the Partnership's relocation consultant, and legal counsel. There will need to be a significant increase in resources for the Partnership's operations. The Finance and Administration Committee will meet in January and report back to the Board in February.

Planning and Design

See Mr. Bacon's report above under zoning discussion.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Callahan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Treiber seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Meeting notes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.