

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Thursday, May 5, 2016  
Mansfield Town Hall  
Town Council Chambers**

**4:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

Present: Steve Bacon, Anne D'Alleva, Mona Friedland, Matt Hart, Riley Hasson, George Jones, June Krisch, Mike Kirk, Bonnie Kumiega, Paul McCarthy, Toni Moran, Diana Pelletier, and Paul Shapiro

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Kathleen Paterson

Partnership Attorney John Zaccaro

Guests: Francine Christiansen with Christiansen Consulting; and UConn Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture Kristin Schwab

**1. Call to Order**

Vice President Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm in President Philip Lodewick's absence.

Mr. Bacon updated the Board on Board members who were stepping down in June, who had not previously made an announcement, as this may be the last regular Board meeting for some of these members. He recognized Riley Hasson, the Board's student representative, who will be graduating this weekend. Mr. Bacon also recognized two Mansfield Business and Professional Association representatives: Steve Rogers and Bill Simpson. He noted that Mr. Rogers had served on the Board for 15 years and Mr. Simpson for 10 years.

**2. Opportunity for Public to Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes of April 7, 2016**

June Krisch made a motion to approve the minutes of April 7, 2016. George Jones seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

#### **4. Review and Approval of FY2016-2017 Budget**

Ms. van Zelm reviewed the FY2016-2017 Budget noting that it had been endorsed by the Finance and Administration Committee at its April 28, 2016 meeting. She noted a few items including the 21 percent increase in health insurance. She said the Town Finance Dept. expects the increases to be less over the next few years.

Finance and Administration Committee member Matt Hart addressed a few items in the budget on behalf of himself and Committee Chair Tom Callahan who could not make the meeting. Mr. Hart noted that the Partnership employees participate in the Town's health insurance pool. The Town is self-insured. He said for five years there were minimal increases in health care costs, and then the last two to three years the increases have been larger.

Mr. Hart reiterated that Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm had received a favorable evaluation and the Finance and Administration Committee recommended that she receive a three percent salary increase and two percent one time increase. The Committee also recommended that Communications and Special Projects Manager Kathleen Paterson receive a two and a half percent increase and a one-time stipend of \$500, at Ms. van Zelm's recommendation. These recommendations are included in the budget.

Paul Shapiro made a motion to approve the FY2016-2017 budget for the Mansfield Downtown Partnership. Paul McCarthy seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

#### **5. Presentation on Public Spaces Plan – UConn Landscape Architecture Program**

Mr. Bacon said UConn Associate Professor Kristin Schwab and her students have been working on a public spaces plan for a few months. A stakeholder meeting was held on March 28, 2016 and several meetings were held with the Planning and Design Committee as well as one on April 19, 2016.

Mr. Bacon introduced Ms. Schwab.

Ms. Schwab presented ideas for wayfinding signage. She noted that Wilbur Cross Way can be difficult to find and would benefit from more directional signage from Storrs Road. She also noted that the intersection in front of the Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center can be confusing for motorists; there are many U-turns seen at that location.

Ms. Schwab resurrected the idea of an urban trail with markers to note places of interest in the downtown along with QR codes.

If the signs are unified they will look less cluttered.

Ms. Schwab also reviewed the possible location of street furniture, and mentioned the idea for swings in six locations. It provides a whimsical and unique element to the streetscape.

Ms. Schwab presented a Power Point of the concept design for the various public spaces in Storrs Center, as recommended by the Planning and Design Committee at its April meeting. She noted that several of these spaces are private spaces and will need to be reviewed with the private property owners.

She said the preference for the Dog Lane courtyard (between Geno's and Mooyah's) was for a central walkway surrounded by planters and including bistro lights.

With respect to the courtyard between Dunkin Donuts and Brueggers, the Committee recommended an art walk, and the expansion of the hardscape into the now grassy area. Ms. Schwab said her student who worked in this area spoke to the Fire Marshal to ensure that the proposed design met the criteria for getting an emergency vehicle into the courtyard as needed.

The Committee liked the idea for an axial ribbon on both courtyards mid way down Wilbur Cross Way which could also cross over Wilbur Cross Way. There would be platforms for seating and a raised stage near Bliss Boutique.

With respect to the landscaped area on Wilbur Cross Way across from Educational Playcare, the Committee liked the caged playscape idea with a green wall of landscaping behind it. There would be control points to get in and out to address safety concerns.

The team also looked at the intersection of Royce Circle and Elsie Marsh Way and thought there was a lack of pedestrian connectivity. The team proposed a boardwalk from the parking lot across the woods.

The team also looked at the area in front of the Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center and suggested that large planters be placed there.

Ms. Schwab reiterated the need for vegetation along the Post Office wall and to block the utilities to make that area more attractive.

Ms. Schwab also suggested using the downed trees in Whetten Woods for environmental art.

Ms. Schwab said she is working on estimated costs for these design concepts.

Anne D'Alleva commended Ms. Schwab and her students for their great work.

Ms. Krisch made a motion to approve final recommendations from the Partnership Planning and Design Committee for design concepts for public spaces in Storrs Center. Diana Pelletier seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Ms. Schwab said she expects to complete a final report in mid-June.

Ms. Schwab left the meeting.

## **6. Review of Strategic Plan Situational Analysis and Next Steps**

Francine Christiansen reviewed the Situational Analysis with the Board, which it had received in its Board packet.

Ms. Christiansen highlighted a few observations from the Situational Analysis noting that people stated that once the Partnership was formed there was the sense that “things could happen.” The Partnership has also served as a neutral voice.

She said one of the challenges is to convey the Partnership’s role now that it has stepped into a new management and promotion role.

Ms. Christiansen said she will recommend a governance committee that looks at Board and staff succession.

She suggested four areas of opportunity: economic development, streetscape, positioning/communications, and organization/governance/sustainability.

Ms. Christiansen said one way to assist with revenue is to charge fee for service for certain activities.

Ms. Christiansen made some initial recommendations including establishing some task forces (positioning, governance, sustainability) to work on the opportunity areas.

Ms. Christiansen then asked Board members and staff to identify “one thing that the Partnership does really well.” Board members participated in this exercise.

Ms. Christiansen then went over next steps including meeting with the steering committee again in the next few weeks; establishing and meeting with the task forces; and finalizing the strategic plan in the fall.

Ms. Christiansen left the meeting.

## **7. Executive Director Report**

Ms. van Zelm noted that NICABM was now open. She said 32 of the 42 homes in Main Street Homes have been sold.

Ms. van Zelm reminded the Board about upcoming meetings – June 2 public hearing on the zoning permit application from LeylandAlliance for the trail connection from Main Street

Homes to Whetten Woods, CT Main Street Center's Awards Gala at E.O. Smith High School and Downtown on June 6; and the Partnership Annual Meeting on June 15.

## **8. Report from Committees**

### Advertising and Promotion

Chair Toni Moran said the Committee is looking at how to evaluate the benefit of its events to the downtown businesses.

### Business Development and Retention

On behalf of Chair Steve Rogers, Ms. van Zelm said the Committee will meet at H.A. Café on May 12.

### Membership Development

Chair George Jones said memberships are shy of the budget by \$120.

Kathleen Paterson showed the Board a preview of the Partnership website [www.mansfieldmusic.org](http://www.mansfieldmusic.org) with the summer concert information.

## **9. Adjourn**

Ms. Pelletier made a motion to adjourn. Bonnie Kumiega seconded the motion. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.

*Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.*