

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road**

Tuesday, April 19, 2011

MINUTES

Members: Steve Bacon, Karla Fox, Manny Haidous, Jon Hand, Frank McNabb, Peter Millman, Ruth Moynihan, Betsy Paterson, Karin Randolph, Pene Williams

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm and Kathleen Paterson

Guests: Board members Matt Hart, Toni Moran, Alex Roe, Kristin Schwab, Mansfield Director of Planning Gregory Padick

Storrs Center Team: Tim Andre (Desman Associates), Sam Gardner (Gregg Wies & Gardner Architects), Macon Toledano (LeylandAlliance), Geoff Fitzgerald (BL Companies), Lon Hultgren (Town of Mansfield)

1. Call to Order

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes from April 5, 2011

Mr. Bacon noted one change on the minutes. The minutes should reflect that the meeting was a special meeting. Frank McNabb made a motion, with that change, to approve the minutes of April 5, 2011. Jon Hand seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Continued Review and Recommendation of Zoning Permit Application for Parking Garage and Intermodal Center

Mr. Bacon introduced Tim Andre, Sam Gardner, Macon Toledano, and Lon Hultgren.

Mr. Bacon noted that this was the Committee's fourth meeting on the parking garage and intermodal center having met in February, March and earlier in April.

Mr. Bacon said part of the agenda for tonight will be for the Committee to decide at the end of the meeting if it is comfortable making a recommendation that the Storrs Center parking garage and intermodal center zoning permit application is compatible with the Special Design District design guidelines.

Geoff Fitzgerald referenced a slide that showed that a sidewalk had been added to the north side of the garage to allow for better pedestrian access. The Committee had discussed this at its last meeting. Mr. Fitzgerald said the sidewalk is designed for 5 feet and will allow for more direct access from the DL-1 building.

Mr. Fitzgerald also noted that a third crosswalk has been added to the intersection near the intermodal center with a 3-way stop.

Pene Williams asked if there is a place to turn if a person attempts to park on the Village Street and cannot find a spot. Mr. Fitzgerald said there is room to do a loop along the one-way street that parallels Village Street.

Mr. Fitzgerald said there are two staging bus berths on the road behind the garage and two bus stops adjacent to the intermodal center. There is a fifth berth along the Village Street, closer to Storrs Road.

In his opinion, the current design meets the Storrs Center design guidelines.

He said the design of the Village Street out to Post Office Road is underway and will be the subject of another zoning permit application.

In response to a question from Mr. Bacon, Mr. Fitzgerald said the sidewalk behind the garage was expanded from 3 feet to 5 feet and will be concrete which will allow for low maintenance.

Macon Toledano said the goal was not to focus pedestrian access in the road behind the garage but wanted it to be accessible for those who choose to walk that way. The intention is to focus people on walking on the wider sidewalks on Village Street to access the garage and intermodal center.

Mr. Hand asked if the road behind the garage will be lit at night. Mr. Toledano replied in the affirmative.

Peter Millman, who had raised the concern about pedestrian access on the road behind the garage, said that the terrain does not allow for a wide road or sidewalk. Given those constraints, he is satisfied with the changes.

Kristin Schwab suggested creating better ground cover in the area and larger shrubs. Mr. Fitzgerald said the team needs to develop its landscaping plan. Mr. Toledano said the team would need to work with the Greek Center property owners since the edge of the road backs up to their property.

Mr. Toledano said that the folks from WRTD and Peter Pan like the berthing area because it allows for their buses to stage until they move on to other stops.

Mr. Hand asked about the site lines where the buses park adjacent to the intermodal center. Mr. Fitzgerald said the site lines are fairly open. There is no grade change. He said they may soften the radii a bit.

Sam Gardner said the area will “read” as a pedestrian area. It should be a low speed area.

Mr. Fitzgerald said if the budget allows it, they may show pedestrian textured sidewalks.

Mr. Hand expressed concerns about a child crossing and a bus not seeing the child.

Mr. Haidous asked how snow will be removed from the garage. Tim Andre said the maintenance of snow removal still needs to be discussed. Mr. Fitzgerald said that if the snow needs to be removed from the building, it may need to be hauled away. A foot of snow should be able to be accommodated on the deck.

Ms. Williams asked if a pedestrian needs to have right of way in the crosswalk. Mr. Fitzgerald replied in the affirmative and noted that there need to be defined places for pedestrian crossing.

Ms. Schwab noted the changes made with the additional crosswalk and said it would allow for a flow to be focused toward the stores on the Village Street. Ms. Paterson agreed that stop signs will help with pedestrian safety.

Mr. Hand asked if there will be stop signs on the road behind the garage. Mr. Fitzgerald said he thought there would probably be a stop sign north of building VS-7.

Ms. Williams asked about whether there can be turning lanes in the Village Street network. Mr. Fitzgerald said he did not think they were warranted or needed as it would only cause people to drive faster.

Mr. Bacon summarized the conclusions thus far. He said that the Committee appears to be satisfied with the sidewalk behind the garage; landscaping along the ground cover adjacent to the road north of the garage would be desirable; and an all way stop at the intersection near the garage.

Tim Andre reiterated that the garage is planned to be 6 stories of approximately 600 spaces. The elevations for the stair tower have been simplified so the second roof on the stairwell/elevator has been eliminated.

Mr. Andre showed some of the renderings for the garage, noting that the sidewalks, the intermodal center, and the mixed-use buildings are not to scale with the garage.

Mr. Andre said the TS-2 building which lines the garage is limestone and brick. He said he tried to pull red into the mesh in the garage to contrast with the gray of the garage. The railings in the garage will be red. Mr. Andre said Desman is trying to coordinate the glass to be same color of the glass in the intermodal center.

He said the intermodal center has a canopy that will be used as the entry to the garage.

Mr. McNabb asked about the location of the bike entry. Mr. Andre said it would be adjacent to the garage entrance in the intermodal center.

Matt Hart asked about the entry for the residents in TS-2. Mr. Andre said that residents can enter at each level of the garage with a key card. Per the zoning regulations, each residence will be allocated 1.25 spaces. Mr. Toledano said this is an average. Mr. Toledano reiterated that the upper floors of the garage will have nested parking spaces for the residents.

Mr. Hart asked if there will be two stairwells. Mr. Andre replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Hart asked about the best access to the garage from the TS-1, DL-1 or DL-2 buildings along Dog Lane. Mr. Toledano said they can use the stairwell closest to Dog Lane. Mr. Hart asked if there will be appropriate lighting in the stairwells and Mr. Toledano replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Schwab asked about the service area for the TS-2 building. Mr. Toledano said it is a challenge to service TS-2. There will be a service driveway for commercial tenants. There may need to be a gate and the area needs to be large enough for trucks. Mr. Hart asked if tenants from TS-1, DL-1 or DL-2 will try and use the service area to access the garage. Mr. Toledano said it will not be set up for pedestrian access.

Mr. Toledano said there may be “scoring” (shadow lines cut into concrete) above the intermodal center roof. This would be an add-alternate.

Peter Millman said he likes the windows “punched” through on the garage. He said he has some concerns about the elevator stairwell as the design seems inconsistent with the garage and intermodal center. He said he likes the red color on the railings and would like to see it outline the openings on the garage.

Mr. Andre said the concern is to have the openness in the stairwells and elevators to provide passive security so someone can see you. The idea is to have brightness with the windows. Mr. Millman said he did like the amount of glass.

Mr. Toledano said he thought some of these details could be worked out as the project moves forward. He did note that security was a key issue for the Mansfield Director of Public Works and the Federal Transit Administration.

Mr. Millman asked about a stairwell without a curtain wall/one with all glass? Mr. Andre said he would look into this. Mr. Toledano said this will need to be reviewed in context with the intermodal center design.

Mr. Andre said they would like to provide lights off the garage to light the sidewalk.

Mr. Gardner showed the latest intermodal center drawings. Mr. Gardner showed the interior plans which include a waiting area and a multi-purpose bike space. There is also a shower area for commuters. Access will be key card controlled.

Mr. Gardner said he is pricing out the cost of a second floor that would include office space.

Mr. Gardner said that signage can be placed on the building.

Betsy Paterson, Matt Hart, and Toni Moran left the meeting.

Mr. Gardner said they are still looking at where the entry should be located. The Committee was shown the proposed entry and the general consensus was that they like the location. Ms. Schwab suggested a pocket park near the entry.

Mr. Gardner referred to the sun shade and canopy. Mr. Gardner said the canopy overhang is 5 feet. Mr. Millman and Greg Padick thought the overhang should be deeper for sun protection.

Mr. Gardner said there will be street furniture.

Mr. Hand said he likes the clock over the main entrance.

Manny Haidous asked if signage can be placed in the front near the garage. Mr. Fitzgerald said that the development of wayfinding signage is part of the grant from the Federal Transit Administration. Mr. McNabb asked if the name "Storrs Center" will be placed on any of the buildings. Mr. Toledano said the town square will have signage. Mr. Bacon said that signage would be at the convergence of Dog Lane and the town square.

Alex Roe asked about why particular materials and colors were chosen. Mr. Gardner suggested a strong color and has introduced brick, pulling from the materials included in the mixed-use buildings. Color can be put in the spandrels on the garage.

The Committee discussed color and the zoning permit application approval process.

Mr. Bacon asked for a vote of whether the Committee should consider a motion tonight on the issue of consistency of the zoning permit application with the Special Design District design guidelines or continue discussion at a further meeting. The vote was 7-1 in favor of considering a motion tonight.

Karla Fox made the following motion, seconded by Mr. McNabb:

In accordance with its charge, the Planning and Design Committee of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. has met during the last several months with representatives of the Town of Mansfield (and its consultant team from Desman Associates, Gregg Wies & Gardner, and BL Companies), whose application for a zoning permit for plans to design the Storrs Center parking garage and intermodal center has been submitted to the Director of Planning for the Town of Mansfield. The Committee conducted meetings on February 15, 2011, March 15, 2011, April 5, 2011, and April 19, 2011 to review initial plans for the parking garage and intermodal center, make recommendations for changes to the plans, and review revised plans. Based on its review, the Committee is recommending to the Partnership Board of Directors that the zoning permit for the Storrs Center parking garage and intermodal center meets the design guidelines adopted by the Mansfield Downtown Partnership and incorporated into the Special Design District regulations but withholds its opinion as to color scheme associated with this zoning permit application.

The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Topics for Next Meeting and Set Meeting Date

The Committee will meet on May 17 at 5 pm to review the preliminary Village Street plans and the Sustainability Guidelines checklist with respect to the Phase 1A and 1B buildings (*meeting since changed to June 21 at 5 pm*).

6. Adjourn

Karin Randolph made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hand seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cynthia van Zelm