

## MINUTES

### MANSFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, March 28, 2007

Council Chambers, Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building

Members present: R. Favretti (Chairman), B. Gardner, J. Goodwin, R. Hall, K. Holt, P. Kochenburger,

P. Plante, B. Ryan, G. Zimmer

Alternate present: B. Pociask, L. Lombard

Staff present: G. Padick (Director of Planning)

Chairman Favretti called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### PUBLIC HEARING:

Application to amend the Zoning Regulations; Storrs Center Alliance and Mansfield Downtown Partnership, applicants, File #1256

Application to amend the Zoning Map to create a new Storrs Center Special Design District, Storrs Center Alliance and Mansfield Downtown Partnership, applicants, File #1257

Chairman Favretti opened the Public Hearing at 7:03 for the above applications. Padick read the Legal Notice as it appeared in the Chronicle on March 14 and March 22, 2007. He noted that no public comment would be received at this evening's meeting due to length of the presentation, and added that additional Public Hearing dates have been set for April 5 and April 26, 2007, at which time public comments will be received. Padick read into the record a 3-8-07 letter from Kevin McDonald, Vice Chair of the RPC of the Windham Regional Council of Governments. Padick listed the following communications that have been received and distributed to all members of the Planning and Zoning Commission:

- 3-28-07 memo from Grant Meitzler, Assistant Town Engineer
- 3-27-07 memo from G.J. Padick, Director of Planning
- 3-26-07 letter from Richard Brvenik, President and CEO, Windham Hospital
- 3-26-07 letter from The League of Women Voters
- 3-26-07 letter from Mona and Todd Friedland
- 3-26-07 letter from Andrew Marone, Pres. of the Student Body, Undergraduate Student Government, UConn
- 3-26-07 letter from John Saddlemire, Vice President of Student Affairs, UConn
- 3-23-07 memo from M. Hart, Town Manager
- 3-22-07 letter from Martin Berliner
- 3-22-07 letter from John Martin, President of the UConn Foundation
- 3-22-07 letter from Jennie Talbot, President of Altrusa International
- 3-22-07 memo from Mansfield Traffic Authority
- 3-22-07 letter from Tighe & Bond

- 3-22-07 memo from John Jackman, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal
- 3-22-07 letter from the Residents of Wormwood Hill Road
- 3-21-07 letter from M. Dolan Evanovich, Vice Provost, Division of Enrollment Management, UConn
- 3-21-07 memo from John DeWolf, Mansfield Advisory Committee on Persons with Disabilities
- 3-20-07 letter from Pam Sawyer, President, UConn Parents Association, UConn
- 3-20-07 letter from C. Pierce, Market Master of Storrs Farmer Market
- 3-19-07 letter from Julie Bell-Elkins, Assistant to the Vice President of Student Affairs, UConn
- 3-19-07 letter from Diedre and George Goodrich, 4 Westwood Road, Storrs
- 3-16-07 letter from Donald E. Williams Jr., President Pro Tempore, Connecticut State Senate
- 3-15-07 letter from M. Kevin Fahey, President of UConn Professional Employees Association
- 3-15-07 letter from Roger Adams, Executive Director, The Windham Region Chamber of Commerce
- 3-15-07 letter from Rusty Lanzit, Chairman, WINCOG Board of Directors
- 3-15-07 letter from Laurie Best, 19 Brookside Lane, Mansfield
- 3-14-07 letter from William DeGrazia, UConn Club President
- 3-13-07 letter from John Rowe, Chairman, UConn Board of Trustees
- 3-13-07 letter from Candice Corcione, Executive Director, Tolland County Chamber of Commerce
- 3-12-07 letter from Karin Randolph, 95 Puddin Lane, Mansfield
- 3-11-07 letter from Leon Bailey, Associate Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, UConn
- 3-5-07 letter from Fran Archambault, President, & Lisa Lewis, Exec. Director of the Alumni Assoc., UConn
- 2-26-07 memo from Geoffrey Havens, EHHD

Chairman Favretti reviewed the procedure for this Special Meeting and asked Commission members to hold their questions and comments until the applicants have finished their presentation and the public to hold their comments until the April 5 continuation of this hearing.

Stephen Bacon, Chairman of the Planning and Design Committee and a member of the Board of Directors of the Downtown Partnership, reviewed the background of the Mansfield Downtown Project. He indicated that their main goal is to create an attractive, pedestrian-oriented center for the Town that is economically sustainable and environmentally friendly, on a 47.7 acre parcel of land located south of Dog Lane, north of the Storrs Post Office and east of Storrs Road/Route 195. He asserted that this proposal furthers the four policy goals of the 2006 Mansfield Plan of Conservation and Development. Bacon illustrated the involvement of the many organizations and individuals who participated in this project. He then introduced Macon Toledano, Project Manager, LeylandAlliance. Toledano briefly described his involvement in the various

aspects of the development team's efforts, including those of national, state and local experts.

Toledano introduced Attorney Tom Cody, who detailed the essential elements of the text amendment application. He spoke of the two major components of this application:

1. New Section T to Article X, which would create a new District (SC-SDD).
2. Determining additional changes to the regulations to make the new changes consistent throughout.

Cody outlined the Municipal Development Area (MDP) and indicated that this new Section T would only be applicable in the MDP area. Cody reviewed the land uses that would be allowed in this district and indicated that there would be no negative impact on the health, safety, welfare and property values, and noted that special consideration has been given to pedestrians throughout the design process. Cody outlined the process for rezoning the land to SC-SDD (Storrs Center- Special Design District), and reviewed all the studies that have been conducted, including a Preliminary Master Plan, Master Parking Study, Master Traffic Study, Master Stormwater Drainage Study and a comprehensive set of Design Guidelines.

Cody then detailed the essential elements of the map amendment application. He showed on the map the area proposed for rezoning to SC-SDD for 17.7 acres within the 47.7-acre parcel. He pointed out three parcels in the area that are not part of the project. These would remain as currently zoned, unless the owners of those properties apply for a zone change to SC-SDD for their parcels.

Cody introduced the members of the project team: Macon Toledano of LeylandAlliance, Paul Ostergaard of Urban Design Associates, Lou Marquet of LeylandAlliance, Geoff Fitzgerald of BL Companies, and Norman Goldman of Desman Associates.

Paul Ostergaard, of Urban Associates, spoke about the work of his firm in designing "Main Street Projects" in other college towns. His intent was to feature Mansfield's and the University's architectural traditions within the designs of the Storrs Center project. Ostergaard then reviewed with illustrations the key points in developing the Design Guidelines, which included studies in sight lines, building heights, sidewalk and road widths, pedestrian traffic flow, vehicular traffic flow, parking garages, and the sun and shade effects of buildings in both summer and winter. He detailed the design elements of the four phases of the project which he identified as Phase 1-Town Square Area, Phase 2-Commerical Village Area, Phase 3-Residential, and Phase 4-Market Square Area. He also called attention to the many public spaces in the plan including the Town Square at the north end, the Market Square at the south end, as well as several other subservient spaces. There are also proposed revisions to Route 195 that will transform the road into a commercial main street making it safer for pedestrians.

Lou Marquet, of LeylandAlliance, highlighted environmental planning and storm-water management. He discussed the existing land conditions and identified the vernal pool

and other wetland areas. The project will protect wetlands and wildlife. One of the devices will be a 100 foot buffer around the vernal pool and another will be a one-foot rise or wall at the edge of development. 17.7 acres are to be developed and the remaining 30 acres will be protected by a conservation easement.

Geoff Fitzgerald, of BL Companies, discussed the two key issues of the traffic analysis: the Master Traffic Study and the “rebirth” of Storrs Road. He highlighted the key components of making Route 195/Storrs Road into a “Main Street”, which would include lined sidewalks, more optimal speeds, on-street parking, textured pavers for crosswalks, raised center medians, and creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. He noted that all designs are pending approval from DOT, but said that their Context Design Group has been involved from the beginning.

Norm Goldman, of Desman Associates, discussed the shared use parking analysis and its key components by presenting several detailed analyses and summaries.

Cody summarized the presentation by emphasizing that the design project is of high-quality, with a compact footprint, mixed uses, pedestrian friendly, protective of the environment, and considerate of the health, safety, welfare, pedestrian safety, and property values of the Town.

At 9:48 p.m. Chairman Favretti declared a 5 minute break, then reconvening the hearing at 9:54 asking for comments and questions from the Commission members.

Gardner stated that businesses in this area have not done well in the past due to college students not being around during summers and holidays. She asked how the new development intended to bring and keep businesses here.

Holt wondered how a building for a fast food chain restaurant (and its signage) would be made to fit in. She also expressed surprise at the lack of a one-way traffic pattern that would loop around the project. The applicant responded that two-way traffic on parallel streets is more efficient and gives drivers more choices.

Zimmer asked about accommodations for bike riders, and if the bikeways could be connected to the Town’s existing bike routes. He also sought information about designated parking areas for delivery vehicles.

Hall questioned if the applicant owns all 47.7 acres, and does that number include the land that is not being changed to SC-SDD.

Favretti asked if the guidelines included details on fenestration.

Plante questioned if on-street parking will be metered and will there be time-limits to prevent all-day parking by students.

Pociask asked about lighting styles along 195 versus inside the project, and about underground utilities.

Several Commissioners had questions about the proposed building heights and their relationship to buildings across the street and Favretti wondered about fumes from the parking garages. He also inquired about the traffic circulation as each phase is built, and how circulation would be affected if only Phase One is built.

Kochenburger asked whose jurisdiction is it for police and fire protection.

Zimmer had questions about the conservation easement area, how will it be preserved and will there be public access?

The final question of the evening was by Favretti who wanted to know about the proposed liquor regulations that will suspend the separating distances the town requires in its current regulations.

Adjournment:

Gardner MOVED, and Ryan seconded, to continue the Public Hearing until April 5th.  
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. Favretti declared the meeting adjourned at 10:58p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine K. Holt, Secretary