

MINUTES

Members Present: Chair S. Ferrigno, A. Raggi, C. Chukwuogor, L. Watson

Member Absent: D. Fecho

Ex-Officio Member Present: A. Moran

Ex-Officio Member Absent: B. Shaiken

Staff Present: C. van Zelm, Executive Director, Mansfield Downtown Partnership, and M. Ollenu, Administrative Assistant, Mansfield Downtown Partnership

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Ferrigno called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was no quorum to approve the July 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS AT MEETING

A. Review of Development Guidelines for Endorsement of Projects and Business Proposals

Chair Ferrigno opened discussion on the Economic Development Commission's (EDC) criteria for project endorsement that was discussed at the July 15, 2021 meeting and invited Watson to share his suggested edits on the 2018 criteria. Watson commented on the change from criteria to guidelines, and suggested a critical look at the Mansfield Tomorrow economic development goals vis a vis how many of the goals can be added to the guidelines. Chukwuogor suggested that some specific goals from Mansfield Tomorrow could be adopted as part of the guidelines if they are consistent with the objectives of the Commission.

Watson said he will study the Mansfield Tomorrow economic development goals in order to update the guidelines for member review at the next meeting. Van Zelm said the goals were outlined in the EDC Work Plan from 2017 to 2018, serving as tasks for the EDC's work. Van Zelm will coordinate with Watson on presenting a revised draft version of the development guidelines to the EDC at its next meeting.

B. Referral from PZC on Amendments Related to Manufacture and Sale of Alcohol

Van Zelm noted the referral memo from Mansfield's Director of Planning and Development, Linda Painter to the EDC with respect to proposed amendments to Article 7 of the Mansfield zoning regulations related to the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquor.

Van Zelm noted that State Representative Gregg Haddad spearheaded the effort at the Connecticut General Assembly to amend the state statutes to eliminate the petition and referendum requirements for the sale of alcohol permits, and instead allow that decision to be made by the municipality's legislative body.

On August 9, 2021, the Mansfield Town Council approved adding the following permit types to the list of authorized authorizing permits for the sale of alcohol: patios, extension of use and/or indoor consumer bar; farmers market sales permit; and manufacturer permit for wine, cider and mead. On September 20, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) will commence a public hearing to add farm breweries, farm distilleries, farmer's markets, and manufacturing of wine, cider, mead to the list of uses to which the sale of alcohol would be permitted as an accessory use; add farm breweries and distilleries to the list of authorized uses in the RAR-90 and PVRA zones provided special permit approval is obtained; add farmer's markets to the list of authorized uses in the RAR-90 and I zones. Markets would be permitted by-right, provided the market is located on the site of a government facility or use; otherwise special permit approval would be required.

Mayor Moran noted that the statue has a long list of potential permits and these three were chosen because there were businesses (Kirby Mill, Storrs Farmers Market) who were interested in applying for a permit for the manufacturing and/or sale of alcohol. She noted that the Council approves changes to ordinances whilst the PZC approves changes in regulations. According to Mayor Moran, the Town will set up subcommittees to look at other permits that can be added. She noted that the focus should be policy definitions and not solely for applicant usages.

Chukwuogor asked how best the EDC can support this referral and asked whether the town will benefit from this economically in terms of job creation, quality of life, increased revenue, etc. Mayor Moran said the changes would have business, cultural, and community building benefits, and serve as a draw for people to come to Mansfield. Though EDC members present supported the approval of the changes, there was no quorum for a support letter to be sent to the PZC. Members agreed to table the discussion until the next meeting, where hopefully a quorum will be present to vote on whether to send the PZC a letter of support.

C. Update on Implementation of Positioning and Marketing Development Plan

Van Zelm shared with members some of the key projects that the Partnership has been working on with respect to implementing the Positioning and Marketing Development Plan. She said Simpleview has been chosen to provide the forum for the development of a community calendar and an agreement between Simpleview and Town staff is being reviewed.

Van Zelm also touched on the two gateway signage projects at Routes 6 & 195 (adjacent to the Staples complex) and the other at Routes 195 & 32. She noted that sign maker ARTfx has had some delays in material sourcing for the base for the signs.

Van Zelm said she is also finishing up a Request for Proposals for a comprehensive sign program for the town.

Van Zelm updated members on the distribution efforts so far on the "Explore Our Town" guides. Out of the 5000 copies printed, approximately 2401 have been distributed so far to realtors, university/college human resource departments, Town of Mansfield human resource offices, Windham Hospital, the Route 84 Welcome Center in Willington, and chamber of commerce, among others. An outreach effort

is also underway to manufacturers' human resource contacts in Eastern Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts for recruitment purposes.

Van Zelm said a rack card geared toward visitors is being developed that will be placed at all the welcome centers, the Hartford Convention Center, and other places.

Van Zelm said plans are also underway to bring on a media consultant to help develop a plan for media placements in popular digital and print publications, and other media, to advertise Mansfield.

Van Zelm reiterated that all these projects have been budgeted and approved by the Town Council.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Member Updates- New EDC Members

Chair Ferrigno informed members of the resignation of Bill Okeson and asked members to bring the name of one potential new member to the next EDC meeting.

Mayor Moran said the Town Committee on Committees may be able to help with recruitment.

B. Staff Updates

None noted that was different from update given on Implementation of Marketing and Development Plan by van Zelm.

C. Housing Updates

Van Zelm briefed members on the PZC public hearing scheduled for August 30, 2021 for the Haven Campus Communities proposal for multifamily housing, and the approval by the PZC on the amendment of zoning regulations to establish standards for drive thru facilities in the Plan Business 1 Zone focused on auto centric areas. Van Zelm also shared that the PZC approved a nine-month moratorium on cannabis establishments while regulations are being developed.

In response to the recent purchase of property by UConn at Four Corners, Mayor Moran noted that State Representative Haddad has sent correspondence to UConn noting that he plans to introduce legislation to require UConn to go through a similar process as other state agencies to purchase property. Mayor Moran also said she spoke at a recent UConn Board of Trustees meeting noting her concern about the impact of the purchase on Mansfield.

Ferrigno said the approval by the PZC of the Agbotic project has been appealed by some of the neighbors.

D. Business Updates (Closings/Opening)

Ferrigno noted that it appears that the former Pup 32 is now under new ownership as there is a sign with the name Pourhouse on the property. Watson said Fresh Fork is now open in the University Plaza. Van Zelm said there is a new hair dresser at Four Corners, and Brooklyn Dumplings is moving into the Farmhouse Crepes space. Raggi updated on Glisten Diamonds which will commence business on September 1 in his State Farm building.

E. EDC Calendar

There was no discussion on the calendar.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

All noted.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Next regular meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

B. Future Meeting Topics

Ferrigno will meet with staff to discuss future topics.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chukwuogor made a motion to adjourn. Watson seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Mary Ahima Ollenu
Administrative Assistant