



**Mansfield Downtown Partnership  
Board of Directors Meeting  
November 5, 2020  
By Teleconference  
4:30 PM**

**DRAFT Minutes**

Present: John Carrington, Mario Conjura, Steve Ferrigno, Frank Gifford, Prabhas KC, Toni Moran, Kyle Muncy, Diana Pelletier, Sean Vasington, Emily Wicks, and Cara Workman

Board Emeritus: Steve Bacon

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Kathleen Paterson, Denise Kegler, Mary Ollenu

Guests: UConn President Thomas Katsouleas, Ryan Aylesworth, incoming Mansfield Town Manager

**1. Call to Order**

President Diana Pelletier called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM.

**2. Opportunity for Public to Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Meet and Greet with University of Connecticut President Thomas Katsouleas**

Members of the Board, Board emeritus Steve Bacon, Partnership staff, and Ryan Aleysworth introduced themselves.

President Tom Katsouleas expressed his support for the Partnership and noted its efforts to keep visitors and residents safe in Downtown Storrs due to COVID-19. He noted, in particular, the efforts by Mayor Moran and the Town to assist with testing residents of the Oaks (many of whom are UConn students) and assisting with getting information out about the quarantine. He also recognized Town residents for their generous spirit in supply 600 care packages to residents of the Oaks.

At Cara Workman's suggestion, Board members suggested topics for President Katsouleas to discuss at the annual meeting on December 10. Suggestions include UConn's strategic planning process that will kick off shortly; collaboration efforts with the Town to promote good community relations, and economic development; and coordination between UConn's strategic plan and a strategic plan that the Partnership will undertake in early 2021.

President Katsouleas invited members of the Partnership Board to engage in the early imagination

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stage of the strategic planning process. Ms. Workman will follow-up with UConn Provost Carl Lejuez.

Ms. Pelletier thanked President Katsouleas for meeting with the Board. President Katsouleas left the meeting.

#### **4. Approval of Minutes of October 1, 2020**

Frank Gifford made a motion to approve the October 1, 2020 minutes. John Carrington seconded the motion. Toni Moran abstained. The motion was passed with the one abstention.

#### **5. Executive Director Report**

Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm noted the Annual Meeting on December 10 and asked Board members to RSVP if they have not already responded.

She said the Town Guide is almost ready to go to the printer and be put on the Town website. She and Senior Communications Manager Kathleen Paterson are working on distribution locations of the hard copies.

Ms. van Zelm said the gateway signage project is also well underway with design and the goal is to install the signs at the southern and northern gateways before it gets too cold.

She said the Regional Economic Vitality Action Plan is complete and a small steering committee representing all four towns – Bolton, Coventry, Mansfield, and Tolland – has been formed to begin the implementation. The Town Council will need to approve a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize moving forward on implementation.

#### **6. Update and Discussion of Business Outreach**

Ms. van Zelm referred to an update on business support that she had e-mailed Board members earlier in the day. She noted that the State has developed a CT Cares grant program for businesses for a \$5,000 grant. The application is to be ready the week of November 9. She asked Board members to make personal calls and/or e-mails to the businesses on their outreach list. She will let Board members know as soon as the application is ready from the state.

Ms. Paterson asked Board members to also ask for updated business hours so she can keep the website up to date.

Ms. Paterson said she was working on a Merry Mansfield campaign that will be similar to Halloween Happenings that will include various events going on in the community. She said there is not a lot of information American Express' Small Business Saturday thus far this year. Ms. Paterson said she thought the Partnership efforts would cover more ground.

Sean Vasington noted an initiative in Cambridge, MA where MIT students are assisting with providing some life to empty storefronts. Ms. Paterson said Partnership Event Coordinator Denise Kegler is



working on an initiative to improve empty storefront windows for the winter season.

Ms. Kegler said Winter Welcome is planned as a drive through event this year due to safety restrictions and guidelines. She is working to confirm partners for seasonal displays. A video with taped musical contributions will be shown. Ice sculptures, Santa, and dance businesses are confirmed. A gift bag will be given to participants on their way into the event. A tree decorating contest is also planned.

Ms. Workman said she has decorations that could be borrowed for the event.

## **7. Report from Committees and Task Forces**

### Celebrate Mansfield Festival

Chair Emily Wicks said the Committee met on November 7 to debrief the Festival. The goal and hope is to bring back the successful event from 2019 with the overall start at 2 pm followed by a concert at 6 pm.

### Governance Committee

Chair Pelletier asked Board members for suggestions for additional Board members.

The Committee discussed President succession when Ms. Pelletier term ends in June. Ms. Pelletier said Kyle Muncy agreed to serve as President. Mr. Muncy said he is looking forward to serving and expressed how important Downtown Storrs is for the community.

### Executive Committee

Ms. Pelletier said the Executive Committee met and is suggesting that the Board move ahead with a strategic planning process with the help of a consultant. She said Mr. Vasington agreed to co-chair the effort.

Mr. Vasington said he would like to get a steering committee together to develop a scope of work, and a budget with the goal of releasing a Request for Proposals for a consultant in March/April.

Ms. Workman suggested UConn business faculty might be helpful in the process.

Ms. Moran asked how the timing on the UConn strategic plan would fit in with the Partnership's efforts. Ms. Workman suggested they will complement each other but the Partnership and Downtown Storrs planning process should stand on its own.

Ms. Paterson asked if the strategic plan was for the Partnership or for Downtown Storrs as a location. Ms. Vasington said the plan would be for both – once the goals for Downtown Storrs are evaluated, they would guide the work of the Partnership. He also noted that the role of the Partnership in town-wide economic development should be part of the discussion.



### **8. December 3, 2020 Board meeting**

Ms. Moran made a motion to cancel the December 3 Board meeting. Mr. Gifford seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

### **9. Adjourn**

Ms. Wicks made a motion to adjourn. Steve Ferrigno seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:03 pm.

*Minutes prepared by Cynthia van Zelm.*