

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present: Chair S. Ferrigno, D. Fecho, L. Watson, W. Okeson,

Ex-Officio Members Present: A. Moran

Ex-Officio Members Absent: B. Shaiken

Members Absent: A. McPherson, C. Chukwuogor, M. Hirschorn,

Staff Present: C. van Zelm, Executive Director- Mansfield Downtown Partnership, L. Painter Director of Planning and Zoning Department and M. Ollennu- Administrative Assistant, Mansfield Downtown Partnership

Guest: R. Aylesworth (Town Manager)

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Ferrigno called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes was not approved because there was no quorum.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS AT MEETING

A. Review of Housing Initiatives – Draft EDC Position Letter

Chair Ferrigno updated members on the draft position letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) on the Economic Development Commission's (EDC) support for Multifamily Housing Units in Mansfield. Members were invited to share their views, suggestions and comments. Watson commented on the good work done by Chair Ferrigno and suggested more detail on why current residential stock is not as attractive to prospective buyers. Members agreed to table approval of the letter until next month because there was no quorum.

B. Memo from Executive Director, Cynthia Van Zelm

Following previous discussions on how the EDC is been kept up to date on proceedings at the Inland Wetland Agency (IWA) and the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership put together a memo that highlights some ways members can be in the loop on developments within these Agencies and how best they can follow-up on issues related to housing projects in Mansfield.

C. EDC Governance & By- Laws Subcommittee- Review of DRAFT By-Laws

Watson updated members on some edits and suggestions on the Governance & By-laws Subcommittee's draft By-Laws that seeks to address membership, attendances, and absences amongst other provisions. He suggested there be no further detail on qualifications of EDC members to leave flexibility. Watson said a section is included about members not missing more than three consecutive meetings, otherwise the member will be considered to have resigned. He suggested adding language about remote meetings and that once the pandemic is past, they may be appropriate from time to time. A. Moran informed members that remote meetings are provided for by the State temporarily, are the new reality and thinks will be provided for permanently in some form. Watson and van Zelm will work on fine tuning the By-Laws for further review at the next meeting.

D. Presentation to Town Council

R. Aylesworth targeted a Town Council presentation by the Economic Development Commission on its activities so far that will steer clear of April 2021 because it is budget season and suggested a meeting for March 2021. Van Zelm will discuss with Chair Ferrigno and Vice Chair McPherson on workable dates to meet to prepare for the Council presentation.

E. Election of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary

Chair Ferrigno asked members to suggest people for election to positions in the EDC. Members agreed to table discussions for the next meeting because there was no quorum for approval.

F. Subcommittee Reports

Van Zelm updated members on the EDC's Subcommittees and some challenges associated with membership and scheduling.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Business Updates (Openings/Closings)

Van Zelm updated on the closure of 7/11, Webster Bank and the relocation of Husky Pizza to Coventry. Painter noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) had approved wine manufacturing at Kirby Mill, but with no retail sales allowed on site as not allowable use at this time. The Pampered Porcupine, a wellness facility to be located in the State Farm/ Former Grange building was also approved.

B. Housing Updates

Painter briefed members on the public hearing by the Mansfield Inland Wetland Agency (IWA) for the development of multi-family housing by Haven Communities.

C. Member Updates- New EDC Members

Chair Ferrigno asked for suggestions from members for new EDC members, especially business owners who can then be recommended to the Town Manager to become members. He suggested a few prospective members and received a suggestion from a fellow EDC member. Chair Ferrigno encouraged members to reach out to some more individuals for a larger pool of selection.

D. Staff Updates

Van Zelm briefed members on the Partnership's work with AdvanceCT on potential developable properties in the Opportunity Zone and throughout Mansfield that will be wrapped up in spring 2021. The objective is to have a live document that will change if and when additional properties are added. The document will include hard copies and digital books and serve as a marketing piece.

She also touched on the second round of the Paycheck Protection Program for businesses and how staff and some members of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership Board are reaching out to business to keep them updated on developments in this regard. Also discussed was the Partnership's upcoming events such as a super-sized "Spend and Win" promotion which will have more prizes and another event in the works that will require patrons to show their support for businesses for prizes.

Van Zelm commented on the Mansfield Public School 4th Graders passion project geared towards raising money to buy gift cards for front line workers at Windham Hospital. This two fold project will in essence help Mansfield businesses and also show their appreciation for front line workers. She encouraged members to support their effort and donate to the cause.

Van Zelm said a Town staff team is vetting vendors for the 2021 Community Calendar to make it appealing to visitors, residents and businesses.

Van Zelm also shared that AdvanceCT's site selector service will be free now, making it more appealing to business and municipalities.

Moran said a presentation was given to municipalities at an AdvanceCT meeting by West Council of Governments (COG) about the critical nature of 5G high speed internet services to a community's economic development. Moran suggested that this technology be a priority for the EDC. Van Zelm will send along the presentation that was given by West COG.

R. Aylesworth Town Manager, updated members on the budget outlook for 2021/2022, the town calendar, meeting schedules, and ongoing improvement of the Town's website to make it a dynamic resource and asked for additional suggestions of where to circulate the new Town newsletters. The bi-monthly newsletters are being developed by Communications Specialist Margaret Chatey and the inaugural issue should be available in early February. He also touched on the scheduling of appointments for the Covid 19 vaccine, suitable locations and venues, and transportation to vaccination sites for people who can't get there and asked for suitable venue suggestions for the vaccinations from members.

E. EDC CALENDER

Chair Ferrigno informed members to be on the lookout for notifications about the EDC's regular monthly meeting and Subcommittee meetings for the year.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chronicle Articles

All noted

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Next regular meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

B. Future Meeting Topics

Chair Ferrigno informed members that the February meeting will tentatively include a presentation from John Prete on his Smart Farm Proposal and an updated proposal for the J.E Shepard property

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ferrigno adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Mary Ahima Ollennu
Administrative Assistant