

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Thursday, September 5, 2019  
Mansfield Town Hall  
Town Council Chambers  
4:30 PM**

**MINUTES**

Present: Steve Bacon, John Carrington, Frank Gifford, Prabhas KC, John McGuire, Toni Moran, Diana Pelletier, Jessie Richard, Paul Shapiro, and Sean Vasington

Board Member Emeritus: Betsy Paterson

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

**1. Call to Order**

President Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 4:34.

**2. Opportunity for Public to Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes of August 1, 2019**

Toni Moran made a motion to approve the minutes of August 1, 2019. Paul Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

**4. Update on Opportunity Zone Action Plan from Courtney Hendricson, CT Economic Development Resource Center Vice President of Municipal Services**

Mr. Bacon introduced Courtney Hendricson, Vice President for Municipal Services for the CT Economic Resource Center (CERC). Ms. Hendricson is working with the Town and UConn on promoting Mansfield's Opportunity Zone.

Ms. Hendricson passed out an update of the work that CERC, the Town, and UConn have done thus far.

Ms. Hendricson said the federal regulations around Opportunity Zones are still being finalized but she is fairly confident that the final regulations will reflect earlier drafts.

Ms. Hendricson said most of the Opportunity Zone projects have been real estate projects.

With respect to the developer incentive analysis, Ms. Hendricson said CERC provided a comprehensive list of incentives. Any tax abatements would be up to the Town Council to consider. She noted that tax increment financing has been popular in other communities.

Ms. Hendricson said she and Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm have held several meetings with key stakeholders including property owners, UConn faculty and staff, potential investors, fund developers, commercial realtors, and developers, among others.

The market analysis is underway including determining what industries are drivers, and identifying suitable uses.

Two events were held in the spring to provide information about opportunity zones and their benefits, and provide detail on the four main areas in the Mansfield Opportunity Zone.

Ms. Hendricson said the final piece of the Opportunity Zone Action Plan is to market the Zone including developing a book of available properties (sell sheets in hard copy and web-based).

Betsy Paterson asked what has been done to educate the public about the Opportunity Zone. Ms. Hendricson said there has been discussion about an event for the public. Ms. van Zelm noted that the Town's publication Mansfield Views has had a few articles about the Mansfield Opportunity Zone. The Mansfield Views goes to every Mansfield household.

John McGuire asked if there has been much competition among towns for development. Ms. Hendricson said she has not seen much competition for development in the opportunity zones. With this in mind, Mr. McGuire said he is generally not in favor of tax abatements for development in the Mansfield Opportunity Zone. The location of UConn in Mansfield should be an incentive. Ms. Moran noted that the Town Finance Committee had received a presentation from Ms. Hendricson as well and similar thoughts as Mr. McGuire's had been expressed by some Councilors. Mr. Shapiro echoed the comments of Mr. McGuire.

Ms. Hendricson said any incentive should be "icing on the cake"/incentives should not be the driving force to bring in development. Incentives should be supported by the community and any developer.

Mr. Shapiro expressed his support for business development in the Opportunity Zone.

Ms. Hendricson confirmed in response to a question from Betsy Paterson that any development on private property would need to adhere to Town land use regulations. Sean Vasington said that development on UConn property does not have to go through the Town approval process but any project would be treated like any other project on the UConn campus for review.

Ms. Hendricson said she also updated the Planning and Zoning Regulatory Review subcommittee, the Town Council, and the Economic Development Commission about the Mansfield Opportunity Zone.

## **5. Executive Director Report**

Ms. van Zelm invited Board members to the regional economic development focus group with the towns of Bolton, Coventry, and Tolland on September 30. The Mansfield stakeholder group meeting is September 12 and Board members Ms. Moran and Jessie Richard are scheduled to attend.

With respect to the public spaces design, Ms. van Zelm said in reviewing the CT-AARP grant and talking to her contact at CT-AARP, they were more comfortable with paying for gliders instead of the stools serving as the seating in the Wilbur Cross Way courtyard. Ms. van Zelm has ordered two

gliders. She said she expects work to start on the Dog Lane courtyard and Wilbur Cross Way courtyard in the next week or so.

## **6. Review of Summary of Business Outreach and Next Steps**

Ms. van Zelm reviewed the summary of business visits conducted by Board members over the last year. She suggested that business visits continue.

The Board discussed the best way to continue to outreach to businesses. After discussion, the Board agreed to focus its visits on new businesses and those the Board has not approached yet. The second step would be to follow-up with people by e-mail that Board members met with on a once a year basis.

Frank Gifford suggested adding three visits a year by Board members to the Board engagement grid.

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

### Celebrate Mansfield Festival

Chair Richard said the Committee needs help at the headquarters booth and asked for Board volunteers.

### Governance Committee

Chair Bacon said Mr. Vasington has agreed to serve on the Governance Committee, and Ms. Moran and Mario Conjura with People's United Bank have agreed to serve on the Finance and Growth Committee.

The Committee also talked about Board succession as Mr. Bacon rolls off the Board as of June 30, 2020.

Mr. Bacon commended Kathleen Paterson, Communications and Special Projects Manager, and Denise Kegler, Event Coordinator, for their work this past summer on events.

Mr. Bacon said he is looking into a local music showcase for this summer.

## **8. Adjourn**

Ms. Richard made a motion to adjourn. Mr. McGuire seconded the motion. The motion was approved. The meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm.

*Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.*