

JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
AND TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 9, 2016

Mulvey Municipal Center – North Conference Room – 7:00 p.m.  
Westbrook, CT 06498

PRESENT: TCRC: Marilyn Ozols, Chair; Darlene Briggs; James Crawford; Matt Diamond  
EDC: James Crawford, Chair; Darlene Briggs; Mark Lynskey

ALSO PRESENT: Meg Parulis, Town Planner; Erica Evans, Recording Secretary

JOINT MEETING:

1. Call to Order

Ms. Ozols called the meeting of the Joint Economic Development Commission and Town Center Revitalization Committee to order at 7:02 PM. She noted there was not a quorum for either the TCRC or EDC, but that there should soon be a quorum for TCRC. The group planned to have an informal discussion until a quorum was met.

2. Town Center Parking Project/STEAP – Landscape Plan

Ms. Parulis shared a plan for the landscaping of the proposed parking lot area. Porous asphalt will be used for the parking lot surface based on requirements imposed by the Wetlands Commission and stormwater management requirements in the Zoning Regulations. The plan for the landscaping in the back area of the parking lot and front corner adjacent to the bank will be permanent. The committee liked the idea of including a couple little picnic table areas and amenities like garbage cans, bike rack, etc. There is a space reserved for a future building in front of the parking lots that will temporarily be planted and where the pathways are currently shown. The Committee preferred a stone dust path that could be easily removed if a building were to be constructed. The landscape designer recommends using groundcovers rather than grass. Benches could also be included. Ms. Ozols suggested that the benches selected for the Town Green be used to keep everything uniform. Ms. Parulis asked if the Committee was interested in incorporating a sign kiosk on the front lot. Again, members felt that this would not be prudent if the hope is that a building will someday be constructed. Ms. Ozols expressed a concern about the maintenance of the plantings proposed. Ms. Parulis explained that while the plantings might require a little more maintenance up front, they would be easier to maintain than grass once established. Kathy Connolly, the landscape designer, was mindful of the soils as well as the sun exposure in choosing the plants. She would like to discuss with the engineer the possibility of allowing some of the runoff from the parking area to be diverted into the planted area to provide water for the plants. Ms. Parulis acknowledged that more detail was needed on the specific plantings. Ms. Ozols stated that she likes the look, but wants to make sure it is something that can be maintained. Ms. Ozols and Mr. Crawford suggested smaller areas that can be maintained by Adopt-A-Spot, but feel that the plan, as shown, may be too much to maintain. There was discussion of the sidewalk proposed along the front of the parking lot and concern that it may get damaged if a building is constructed. The consensus was that it was an important element and could be repaired if need be.

Mr. Diamond joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m. making a quorum for the TCRC.

Mr. Diamond asked about whether the Knothe Road access could be improved. Ms. Parulis explained that there are no proposed changes at this time but that efforts will be made to obtain shared access through the bank property. Mr. Diamond asked for clarification of whether the existing sidewalk on Rte. 1 remains. Ms. Parulis responded that it was not shown on the landscaping plan but is shown on the site plan. The Committee likes the layout of the proposed plan, but additional details are needed before they can be finalized. Ms. Ozols cautioned about creating a space that people will not want to see replaced by a building. It was agreed that the Zoning Commission public hearing should be postponed until all the details have been worked out. Based on the feedback provided, Ms. Parulis will work with the landscape designer to finalize the plans.

Removal of the bump outs on the green was discussed next. Ms. Ozols indicated that she would like to see a different material used in the parking spaces to distinguish them from the road. The purpose being to

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visually narrow the road so drivers won't speed. Mr. Diamond offered that there is an upcoming meeting to discuss slowing the traffic from the highway into the area of the Green. He asked about using Belgian block. Ms. Parulis explained that DOT will not allow pavers of any kind. Ms. Ozols explained that the head of DOT is onboard with the idea of traffic calming, but some of the other people at DOT are not as aware. Ms. Ozols shared an example of stamped pavement on a state road in Farmington. Ms. Parulis expressed concern about the busyness of the pattern and having different treatments in different areas. She feels the design should be consistent throughout all areas around the Green. Ms. Parulis reported that the engineers had suggested use of a colored asphalt. Mr. Diamond agreed with Ms. Parulis' philosophy of keeping things uniform. After some discussion, Ms. Parulis was directed to find out more about the possibility of using colorized asphalt and to try and get an estimate of what it would cost. Mr. Diamond is working on getting signs in the center of the crosswalk to get drivers' attention to slow down. Ms. Parulis will continue to explore other options for traffic calming and report back to the Committee. Mr. Diamond expressed frustration that the plans would be held up while this is being researched and that he would like to move things forward. After further discussion, it was agreed that this research would not delay the project since there were other details that needed to be worked out.

3. Town Center Wastewater Study – Project Update

Ms. Parulis reported that she is meeting with the engineer this coming Monday to discuss the soil borings and discuss some alternative locations. She will report back at the next meeting.

Mr. Diamond explained that the Little League and the carnival organizers are creating some pull back and having an alternative plan is very important. Ms. Parulis also reported that temporary use of the Green for the expansion of a system to support re-development of the old Westbrook Deli/Pizza buildings was agreeable to most of the property owners adjacent to the Green. The only property owner she hasn't talked to is the owner of Turtle Café. Use of the Green for this purpose would be subject to approval by the Board of Selectmen and a Town Meeting and would be contingent on hook-up to the community system once it is established.

4. Minutes: Regular Meeting, May 5, 2016

The minutes from the May meeting were not ready to be presented and approved at this meeting.

5. Adjournment

**Ms. Briggs made a motion to adjourn at 8:07 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Diamond and unanimously approved.**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION:

1. Call to Order

Mr. Crawford called the EDC meeting to order at 8:07 PM, and made note that there was no quorum.

2. Update on New Development Applications – Town Planner

Ms. Parulis reported that no big applications were submitted.

The public hearing for 20 Westbrook Place (Gowrie corporate wellness/fitness center) was closed. No decision has been made. It will likely be decided at their meeting on June 28<sup>th</sup>.

There is continuing interest by other businesses to come into the Town Center. The Town was invited to participate in a workshop sponsored by the Partnership for Strong Communities that matched developers with towns. Mr. Diamond attended and there is interest by a firm in Guilford that is not only a developer, but also a facilitator to get grants, etc.

Mr. Crawford asked about the potential dance/music studio at the antique store. Ms. Parulis stated that she has not heard anything more on this.

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There is interest in developing a restaurant at 1306 Boston Post Rd. (across from JoJo's). The building in the back may need to be torn down. Septic would again become an issue. Additional soil testing would also need to be done.

There was also interest in the trolley building. Septic and parking continue to be an issue for re-development.

4. Historic Marker on Town Green  
Mr. Crawford is still waiting to hear back from someone on the historic marker and will report back at the next meeting.
5. Town Center Market Analysis – Project Update  
Ms. Parulis reported that she has reviewed a draft report of findings. It should be ready for presentation at the next meeting.
6. Turnpike Autowreckers Brownfields Grant – RFQ  
Ms. Parulis is waiting to hear back from the State to get authorization to issue.

TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE:

1. Call to Order  
Ms. Ozols called the TCRC meeting to order at 8:15 PM.
2. Minutes: Regular Meeting, May 5, 2016  
The minutes from the May meeting were not ready to be presented and approved at this meeting.
3. Bills: Recording Secretary.....\$ 121.21  
Speaking of Landscapes, LLC.... \$150.00  
Woodard & Curran, Town Center Parking.....\$2,005.00

**Ms. Briggs made a motion to pay the bills as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Crawford and unanimously approved.**

4. "Quick Hits" Project  
Ms. Gordon is managing Quick Hits while Ms. Rie is away.  
  
In regards to the family/ADA portalet, it was thought that it would fit, but it won't. If it were put right up against the stairwell with a fence to cover the height of the portalet, it would cover the view of the window. Currently, there is a display and tree blocking the view of the window. If the portalet were to be shifted over, it would not cover the window. Mr. Diamond suggested installing a bathroom on the Green and tying it in to the septic under the Green.
5. Adjournment  
**Mr. Crawford made a motion to adjourn at 8:22 PM. The motion was seconded by Ms. Briggs and unanimously approved.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Erica Evans, Recording Secretary