

APPROVED

JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
AND  
TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 26, 2013  
Mulvey Municipal Center – 7:00 p.m.  
**North Conference Room**

PRESENT: TCRC – Marilyn Ozols, Darlene Briggs, Jim Crawford, Deb Rie  
EDC – Jim Crawford, Darlene Briggs, John Leake

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Lynskey, Nominated Member for EDC; Meg Parulis, Town Planner; Lisa DeMaria,  
Recording Secretary

JOINT MEETING:

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Ozols called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Ms. Ozols asked for a motion to add the discussion of the Wastewater Study to the Agenda.

**Mr. Crawford made a motion to add the Wastewater Study to the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Briggs and carried unanimously.**

Ms. Ozols began by explaining that there was a preliminary meeting with Woodard & Curran and their septic system experts to discuss conducting a study of wastewater management options for the Town Center area. A proposal by Woodard & Curran to conduct the study was distributed to the members. The total cost of the study is estimated to be \$10,900. The study would bring the project to the feasibility level and show the benefits and return on investment, including the location and cost per property. At that point, discussion would continue with the WPCC. A community system would be under WPCC jurisdiction.

Ms. Parulis stated that Woodard & Curran will have no problem determining treatment options, but finding disposal sites will be a challenge. The wastewater study will be done concurrently with the UCONN study to determine the feasibility of implementing the Master Plan. Ms. Parulis reported that she has been in touch with the Tanger Outlet corporate office regarding the use of some of their property on Flat Rock Place for a treatment area. Tanger has agreed to share previous engineering studies that they have conducted to support the wastewater study. The Commission agreed that the wastewater study could be funded from the current operating budgets of the TCRC and EDC.

**2. UCONN Study –Progress Report**

Ms. Ozols began by suggesting that the Members discuss individual components of the plans presented at the previous meeting by Peter Miniutti from the UCONN Collaborative, in order to give Mr. Miniutti specific feedback. The individual components included: 1) creating 3 distinct landscaped nodes at each corner of the Green; 2) installing some sort of fence along the perimeter of the Green; 3) narrowing roads around the Green, and 4) massing of buildings on Westbrook Place.

The first area of discussion centered on the nodes at the corners of the Green. Currently there is a flag pole, Veteran's Memorial and bench at the southeast node. The bench was donated in memory of George Murray who for years organized flag ceremonies for Westbrook Veterans. The bench currently faces Boston Post Road. It was suggested that the bench be relocated to face the flag pole and Veteran's Memorial. As it is currently located, it can sometimes be in the way for ceremonies around the flag pole. Mr. Crawford noted that it was probably placed that way so that the inscription could be seen from the road or sidewalk. Ms. Rie recalled that the plan shown by Mr. Miniutti showed the flag pole at the north to welcome traffic into the Town Center. It was also

suggested that the flag pole be relocated to the center of the Green in order to make room for gathering around the pole during ceremonies associated with the flag. It was the consensus of the group that the bench, flag pole and Veterans Memorial should stay together, and perhaps be re-organized, to comprise the southeast node.

Other suggestions for the north node included directional signage to complement the signs at the highway off ramps, and creating a replica of the watering trough and well head that had been in that location long ago where people stopped to water their animals. Mr. Crawford will try to find some old pictures.

The next topic of discussion was regarding the existing gazebo. Construction of the gazebo was a year-long Eagle Scout project. At that time, much consideration was given to the opinions of all of the groups who used the Green for events, as to where to locate the structure. The consensus by the members was to leave the gazebo in its current location. Ms. Parulis suggested that the gazebo could benefit from enhancements such as plantings, paint and a walkway leading to it. Ms. Briggs offered the idea of the Congregational Church using it for weddings. Ms. Rie noted that the Garden Club had received a grant to plant an historic garden around the Gazebo.

Mr. Crawford continued the discussion stating that he liked the idea of a low wrought iron fence with substantially sized posts surrounding the Green. There was discussion regarding different types of fencing and the possible problems associated with them. A low fence could cause a tripping hazard. Concrete posts with chain fastened between them could be opened when needed for vehicular access but might induce people to sit and swing on them. Much of the loading and unloading of vehicles is done at the north side of the Green because of a low curb cut and available parking but people drive all over. It was suggested that defined openings in the fence might control vehicular access better.

Ms. Ozols felt that fencing may not lend itself to an open and inviting atmosphere during events but might give a feeling of safety. The members agreed that the fencing would be visually appealing but there are functional and practical issues to consider.

Ms. Parulis inquired about the placement of trees around the perimeter and whether the large tree in the northern part of the Green that is in poor health should be replaced. She noted that historically, there were no trees on the Green. Members felt that the "Christmas" tree would need to stay put but that others could be moved or replaced as part of an overall landscaping plan.

Ms. Ozols noted that the front lawn of the Mulvey Municipal Center is another option for holding large events. The lawn is large and there is a lot of parking. Ms. Rie agreed and stated that one size does not fit all and the Green should be thought of as a focal point for smaller activities and not a place for large events. The Green should be more park-like for people to sit while walking, shopping and eating in the Town Center.

The next topic of discussion was regarding the narrowing of surrounding roads. Ms. Parulis questioned whether there was enough of a gain in square footage to the Green to justify the expense of removing pavement and narrowing the roads on Westbrook Place and Essex Road unless it was needed to accommodate a bike lane or widen a sidewalk. She noted that Essex Road along the west side of the Green is crowded in the morning with large utility trucks parking for breakfast at The Westbrook Deli. Ms. Ozols agreed that when traffic is parked on both sides of Essex Road, the road feels narrow.

Ms. Rie felt that grass between the sidewalk and the road, would create a more comfortable feeling for people using the sidewalks and make the Green feel more park-like.

Members agreed that accommodating sidewalks and bike lanes, or creating additional parking, were more compelling reasons to narrow roads than adding to the Green. Getting parking spaces back in front of the Historical Society on Boston Post Road is a priority. Proposed changes to Rte. 1 can be formally approved by DOT through the Rte. 1 Corridor Study which is just getting underway. The DOT eliminated the parking there due to concerns about site-lines at the intersection of Essex Road and Route 1 and to reserve room for a possible third lane. The Committee does not favor a third lane.

Next Ms. Ozols asked for feedback on the latest iteration of buildings on Westbrook Place. Ms. Ozols is concerned that the reconstruction of Westbrook Place could create the look of one mass of buildings. Committee members preferred the first plan that Mr. Miniutti presented to them at the workshop in October 2012. They felt that the SketchUp Model lost some of the small town feel and didn't provide a good transition from existing buildings such as the purple building (30 Westbrook Place) and the Military Museum in the old Post Office building (24 Westbrook Place).

Ms. Parulis will get in touch with Mr. Miniutti to discuss the Commissions suggestions and coordinate a workshop with the Traffic Authority, Mr. Miniutti and Norm Garrick, a traffic engineer with the UCONN.

### **3. Minutes**

**Mr. Crawford made a motion to approve the January 29, 2013 Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Briggs and unanimously approved.**

### **4. Adjournment**

**Ms. Briggs made a motion to adjourn at 8:08 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Crawford and unanimously approved.**

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING:

### **1. Call to Order**

There was no quorum.

### **2. Update on New Development Applications – Town Planner**

Ms. Parulis reported that Dick's Marina, located at 314 Boston Post Road, would like to convert to a restaurant use. No application has been submitted.

The Northeast Fitness Factory located at 172 Boston Post Road has moved to Nod Road in Clinton.

The Goodwill property located at 369 East Main Street in Clinton, is constructing an addition and a building that was approved in 2007 but never built.

The Dibble House property owners, 1961 Boston Post Road, are looking to get a modification to their Special Permit to add a first floor bedrooms to the units which will expand the footprints slightly.

Bliss Gourmet located in the former General Store building at Pilot's Point, is preparing for an April 1, 2013 opening.

### **3. Commission Membership**

Mr. Crawford introduced Mark Lynskey. Mr. Lynskey has been nominated as a new member of the EDC.

## TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE

### **1. Call to Order:**

Ms. Ozols called the meeting to order at 8:17 p.m.

### **2. Minutes**

**Mr. Crawford made a motion to approve the January 29, 2013 Town Center Minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Briggs and unanimously approved.**

### **3. Bills:**

General Funds - Recording Secretary..... \$102.27

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

**4. Special Funds:**

LCRVCOG, STEAP Parking Project.....\$10,000.00

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

**5. Town Center Parking Project/STEAP – Project Update**

There is a very good chance that the Town did not receive the 2012 STEAP Grant, although there has been no formal notification. Ms. Parulis stated that when the Master Plan is completed, the Commission will be in a position to apply for Main Street Investment Fund monies in September and can decide on how to spend the remaining STEAP Grant funds on the parking project. The Department of Public Works has agreed to add processed stone to the site and re-grade it to keep it looking nice.

**6. Rte. 1 Corridor Study – Project Update**

RiverCOG received a STP Grant to conduct a Rte. 1 Corridor Study for Clinton, Westbrook and Old Saybrook. The vision for the study is to marry land use to the functionality of the road. The study will look at the project from a Complete Streets standpoint, including bike lanes, pedestrian access and traffic access management such as organizing curb cuts. This study will create a plan in which the Town’s vision can be coordinated with the state DOT programming needs. The scope includes the section of Rte. 153 (Essex Rd.) from Rte. 1 to I-95. Ms. Parulis would like to see a cohesive bus stop plan as part of the study.

**7. Adjournment**

**Ms. Briggs made a motion to adjourn at 8:29p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Crawford and unanimously approved.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa DeMaria, Recording Secretary