

APPROVED

SPECIAL
JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
AND
TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, April 30, 2014
Mulvey Municipal Center –7:00 p.m.
North Conference Room

PRESENT: TCRC –Marilyn Ozols, Jim Crawford, Darlene Briggs, Deb Rie, Libby Waldron, Mindy Gordon
EDC – Jim Crawford, Darlene Briggs, John Leake, Ron Lyman, Sylvia Guinan

ALSO PRESENT: Noel Bishop, First Selectman; Peter & Natalie Miniutti, UCONN; 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.

2. UCONN Study –Progress Report

Mr. Miniutti began the presentation showing the format of the final report. He went on to discuss the possibility of narrowing the roads surrounding the Town Green. Statistics on speed and pedestrian deaths show that narrower roads slow traffic and response time from peripheral vision is quicker. Narrower roads can be achieved by taking pavement from cars and giving it to other groups such as pedestrians, bikes and open space.

Ms. Rie stated that Rt. I-95 runs parallel to Rt. 1 and is able to accommodate traffic that needs to move through Westbrook and Rt. 1 should be for traffic that is doing business in town.

Mr. Miniutti continued by explaining that Westbrook Place should have 2 travel lanes with a parallel parking lane on each side. He also suggests that rather than taking out the bump-outs, the space between could be filled in as part of the Town Green and there would still be enough room to accommodate the parallel parking. This would cut costs and narrow the road. Mr. Crawford stated that expanding the green to the outer edge of the bumpouts would restore the original edge of the green. History shows that it worked well that way when there was a busy, vital downtown.

Ms. Ozols asked what the State DOT thinks about this concept. Mr. Miniutti stated that the DOT has varying opinions. It will take some effort to get the DOT agreeable but it is possible. The Committee agreed that the concept plan presented by Mr. Miniutti for Westbrook Place parking should be pursued with DOT.

Ms. Gordon asked about bike lanes. Mr. Miniutti explained that he had not looked at bike lanes on these 3 roads. Bike lanes would need to be addressed by others looking at the larger road system.

Ms. Parulis indicated that bike lanes would be looked at through the Rt. 1 Corridor Study.

Mr. Bishop asked if striping a road for 11 foot lanes helps to slow traffic. Mr. Miniutti stated that there is no consensus in the transportation community regarding the effects of striping alone.

Ms. Miniutti gave a presentation on architectural massing of buildings on Westbrook Place. She explained that pedestrians feel more comfortable when an edge is created by using signs, parked cars and plantings to separate foot traffic from automobile traffic. She showed revised renderings for creating 2 story buildings along Westbrook Place that reduce the massing previously presented.

Mr. Miniutti explained that in phase I, the buildings would remain as-is (with the exception of small improvements such as lighting and planters) and work would be done on the infrastructure.

Ms. Gordon stated that the plan is aesthetically pleasing and the colors and second story are in-keeping with the Town Center. She also suggested underground utilities to protect the trees on the green.

Ms. Waldron asked what kind of materials would be used on the exterior of the buildings. Ms. Miniutti stated that a mix of wood, brick and stucco is envisioned.

Ms. Rie stated that she prefers the plan with 2 buildings. It appears less bulky looking than the plan with one building.

Mr. Bishop asked if a study of traffic coming into Town Center from the train station would be included in the scope of the plan. Mr. Miniutti stated that yes; the traffic has been considered and is part of the plan.

Ms. Ozols suggested that Commission members send any ideas for enhancing or changing the format of the final report to Ms. Parulis and she will forward them to Mr. Miniutti.

The consensus of the Commission was that the format was acceptable.

3. Town Center Parking Project/STEAP – Project Update

Ms. Parulis explained that the project is not expected to break ground this year. Negotiations with First Niagara Bank need to be worked out and additional design work is needed for the revised accessway and extended shared parking. The wetlands need to be flagged by a soil scientist and a wetlands permit is needed. The DECD has approved use of the same surveyors and engineers that did work on the first STEAP grant. Additional survey work is needed on the bank property to move forward at a cost of \$5,150.00.

Ms. Briggs made a motion to authorize \$5,150.00 for survey work to move forward with negotiations with First Niagara Bank for shared parking and access to Knothe Road and access through 36 Westbrook Place. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rie and unanimously approved.

4. Rte. 1 Corridor Study – Project Update

Ms. Parulis informed committee members that there will be a Design Charrette scheduled for June 3, 2014 in the Community Room at the library from 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. On June 5, 2014 Fitzgerald and Halliday, the Rt. 1 Corridor Study consulting team, will be at the Town Hall in the Multi Media Room to put together recommendations from the Charrette. The Marina District was chosen as a focus area for the Charrette. Ms. Parulis will enlist their help in persuading the DOT to allow narrower roads around the Green and to restore parking along Rte. 1 adjacent to the Green.

5. Minutes: Regular Meeting, March 24, 2014

Mr. Crawford made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of March 24, 2014 as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Briggs and unanimously approved.

6. Adjournment

Ms. Briggs made a motion to adjourn at 8:47 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and unanimously approved.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING:

1. Call to Order

Mr. Crawford called the meeting to order at 8:47 p.m.

2. Update on New Development Applications – Town Planner

1961 Boston Post Road – VISTA project for 24 units – The Public Hearing was opened and continued by the Zoning Commission to the May 27, 2014 meeting.

Cusson Property –Pond Meadow Road – The State is encouraging the Town to pursue the Municipal Brownfield Liability Relief Program which enables a town to take a contaminated property for back taxes without liability.

Attorney Wells is reviewing the application. The request for an appropriation to conduct additional environmental testing was approved by the Board of Finance and will go to Town Meeting in May or June.

3. Minutes: Regular Meeting, March 24, 2014

Ms. Briggs made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of March 24, 2014 as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Guinan and unanimously approved.

4. Bills: Recording Secretary.....\$39.94

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

5. New Business

Mr. Crawford suggested that the directional signs for the Middlesex Outpatient Facility, at exit 65, be replaced. Mr. Lyman suggested that the Hospital contribute to the cost of the signs since they are a non-profit organization and do not pay taxes to the Town. Mr. Crawford stated that he would approach the hospital to see if they are willing to pay for the signs.

6. Adjournment

Ms. Briggs made a motion to adjourn at 9:02 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Guinan and unanimously approved.

TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE

1. Call to Order

Ms. Ozols called the meeting to order at 9:02 p.m.

2. Minutes: Regular Meeting, November 25, 2013

Ms. Briggs made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 25, 2013. The motion was seconded by Mr. Crawford and unanimously approved.

Special Meeting, January 23, 2014

Mr. Crawford made a motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of January 23, 2014. The motion was seconded by Ms. Briggs and unanimously approved.

Regular Meeting, March 24, 2014

Ms. Briggs made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 24, 2014. The motion was seconded by Mr. Crawford and unanimously approved.

- 3. Bills:** Adopt-A-Spot, Special Funds....\$ 68.85, Computer Signs
Recording Secretary.....\$108.61, (November, January & March Minutes)
STEAP Grant 2011, Special Funds.....\$7,898.75

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

4. New Business:

Ms. Gordon would like to establish a "Quick Hits" program to address small projects in the Town Center such as fixing the gazebo door and spindles, power washing the Riggio Building and fixing the peeling paint on the sign at the cemetery. Ms. Gordon stated that small fixes can make the town look better and create a buzz in the community to encourage people to start improving their properties. The Commission agreed and Ms. Gordon will put together a plan to present to the Commission at the next meeting.

5. Adjournment:

Ms. Briggs made a motion to adjourn at 9:08 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ozols and unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa DeMaria, Recording Secretary