**REGULAR MEETING - BAR**

Brownfield Area-Wide Revitalization (BAR) Grant Sub- Committee

Friday, May 10, 2019 – 9:07 AM

Merrill Seney Community Room

Thompson Town Hall

**Minutes**

**Attending:** J. Blanchette (Chair), B. Davis, J. Hall, C. Langlois, S. Lewis, N. O’Leary, R. Waldron. Staff attending: K. Beausoleil (First Selectman), T. Penn-Gesek (Dir. Planning & Development). Additional attendees: W. Bugden & S. Kellarson (CME), D. Coffey (Hartford Courant Community News), S. Donohoe (Property Manager, 630 Riverside Drive)

1. **Call To Order:** Chair Blanchette calls to order at 9:07 a.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** O’Leary moves to accept the minutes with two corrections: “Rondeau” replaces “Rondo”; and “E. Thomas” replaces “E. Thomson”, both under other business. Langlois seconds. The motion passes unanimously.
3. **Correspondence:**

* Chair Blanchette summarizes an email thread between herself and Judy Rondeau regarding a potential proposal for a 319 grant. Grants would be related to the French River and the mill tailrace and/or improving stormwater quality.
* O’Leary asks if Rondeau has made specific suggestions. Blanchette confirms, referring to an attachment from Rondeau. The attachment was not included in the meeting packet. Blanchette will forward the attachment to Planner Penn-Gesek, in order to review those recommendations & follow up with Rondeau.
* First Selectman Beausoleil states that the recommendations are likely similar to work that was done at the Library.

1. **Citizens’ Comments:**

* S. Donohoe enters at 10 a.m. He updates the committee on the damaged fence for 630 Riverside: it was struck by a drunk driver, and sections have also been intentionally knocked down by recreational fishermen. The section damaged by the driver has been repaired, and he anticipates being able to repair the other section later on today. A prospective buyer from NY state has contacted him several times but has not made a formal offer on the property.
* First Selectman Beausoleil posits that the potential buyer may be holding his cards pending the development of the site at 929 Riverside.

1. **Committee Business:**
2. **CME Bar Grant Task Updates:**
3. **Environmental:** Bugden reiterates from the last meeting that the Phase II has been completed and no large environmental issues are reported.
4. **Transportation:** UConn student projects assessing the Buckley Hill Road intersections at Rte 200 & Rte 12 are complete. Copies were provided to the committee for review. CME is also reviewing, and they are conducting an aerial study of the area as well.
5. **Planning:** The most recent iteration of the Zoning Regulations rewrite was received on 29 April. Penn-Gesek, Blanchette, J. Guszkowski & M. D’Amato of CME are working on setting a date for review of the section related to the River Mill.
6. **Communty Outreach:**

* K. Morander (CME) has created website content & uploaded the drone video created by CME for the dedicated River Mill page on the town website. Current plan is to have the first draft submitted for review by the end of May. CME will forward a link to the committee members for review & comment. Bugden asks: who is the best point of contact, to whom to send the link. It is agreed that is should be sent to the Chair and the Planner to distribute to the rest of the committee.
* Morander is also working internally on a general wayfinding/signage program for the town. They have conferred with D. Very of Putnam regarding their prior program.
* Regarding Historic District signage from National Parks Service: signs are available for approved sites at $3-5k, depending on the style chosen. Bugden believes this is a suitable expenditure
* Some clarification is provided by Waldron and Penn-Gesek, regarding EDC funds that were approved for signage. There were 3 line items approved in April by EDC related to signs: $10k out of $35k quoted for a “talking” sign in front of Town Hall; $5k for redesign (including interpretive signs) for the East Thompson Train Wreck site; and $5k for the general wayfinding project referred to above. The Historical Society has completed an inventory of current signs in Thompson, which was provided to Morander.
* Bugden reiterates that funding may be available to support N.P.S. Historic District signs. It is confirmed that the Mill District is a designated area by SHPO. NPS signs would fall outside any redesign done for a town wayfinding program. Design parameters for those signs are established by NPS only.
* Additional discussion of the webpage for the River Mill. Blanchette recommends that the video be made “live” to the public, regardless of the additional content being completed. Waldron would like to have the page ready for the public to debut at the Branding event on 5 June. It is agreed that the link to review the content will be provided to the committee by 28 May, in order to facilitate the page going “live” by 5 June.
* Bugden has asked the students who provided the traffic study to visit CME for review of their proposal for critique by his staff. The students declined. Beausoleil clarifies that he did ask the students to extend the sidewalks further north than on their initial proposal, and to amend the number of raised crosswalks. Blanchette wonders whether D.O.T. will allow raised crosswalks on Rte 12. Bugden posits that having a designated Historic District site may play favorably with D.O.T. when proposing the raised crosswalks as far north as the K. of C.

1. **Rexnor/BERA update – DEEP/EPA meeting**

* On Thu 9 May, the First Selectman, Planner and Chair Blanchette attended a meeting in Hartford with Gumpert/RMR & Atty. Elkow; Bugden & Kellarson/CME, and staff from DEEP and EPA to discuss ongoing concerns and next steps for the River Mill project.
* Atty. Elkow requested that DEEP clarify in a letter the areas of concern for which Rexnor would be considered the responsible party. DEEP agreed to do so, in order to expedite the process.
* Bugden provided more details about the nature of the disagreement between Rexnor & RMR. He also pointed out that, if the disagreement were to scuttle the deal, Rexnor would be held responsible for the entire site, and the costs of cleanup were the mill to be demolished would be significantly higher for Rexnor.
* The sediment in the headrace remains a sticking point with EPA. EPA proposed a possible temporary solution: to carve the parcel into two sections and issue a stewardship permit for the headrace. EPA has asked CME to provide certain additional information demonstrating the lack of need for an E.R.A. Logic suggests that, since the upstream area beyond the mill site shows more contamination than the downstream area, the contamination of the headrace is unrelated to the mill itself and is flowing downstream from unrelated points north. The resolution of this issue is critical to the success of the entire project, as RMR needs closure in order to be able to secure funding for 2020. CME will send the additional requested information to EPA during the week of 13 May.
* DEEP/EPA/RMR & representatives of the town are scheduled to meet at the Library and then tour the mill at 10 am on Thursday 6 June. First Selectman Beausoleil has invited MSRAC members to attend in support. He will reach out to Rep. Joe Courtney’s office as well. Bugden will email DEEP to invite DECD and SHPO. Beausoleil asks Bugden to confer with Penn-Gesek on sending any additional invitations.

1. **River Mill Redevelopment (RMR) progress**

* First Selectman updates that RMR has new tenants working in the building. There are more “active” tenants, rather than passive storage businesses.
* Davis asks to whom the rents are being paid. RMR? The current owner? Beausoleil believes that all rent is being paid to RMR at this point.

1. **Branding Game Event**

* There is brief general discussion about the details of the event for 5 June. Although up to 96 players are allowed, current rsvps are for <20. The invitation will be sent again on Monday or Tuesday of next week. If significant replies have not been received by Wednesday 15 May, the target audience will be expanded to general residents of Thompson. ZEO Dunne, Blanchette and Lewis are designated as additional “proctors” for the event, if full capacity is reached.

1. **EPA Workforce Grant**

* Bugden summarizes the requirements and goals of the grant program. Penn-Gesek had come across the program and met with M. Chrysochoou of UConn to try to formulate a plan by which the town and the university could partner on a proposal for a program to serve residents of Thompson and the work to be done at the River Mill. Bugden has suggested that the timeframe of the project and the scale are not sufficiently suitable to meet the guidelines for submissions.
* It is suggested that it may be possible to also coordinate with other towns in the region and/or educational programs to come up with a plan for a larger proposal for 2020.
* An update was promised to M. Chrysochoou before the end of the day on Friday 10 May. Planner Penn-Gesek will follow up, and also make the suggestion noted above.
* Any results from that email thread will be provided to the committee at the June meeting.
* Donohoe contributes that there was similar funding provided to train the residents of Three Rows in lead abatement, a number of years ago. Roughly 40 people were estimated to have received that certification & are now employable within that field.

1. **Sustainable CT program**

* Penn-Gesek recaps the adoption of the resolution to join Sustainable CT in late 2018. The resolution has been uploaded to Sustainable CT and now the town can pursue certification in their program.
* A meeting with Colleen Dollard of Sustainable CT is scheduled at Town Hall for Monday 20 May at 2 p.m. Dollard will provide some clarification on how to use the Sustainable CT system, and help develop an action plan for the town.
* Members of MSRAC are invited to attend if they are interested in being part of the Sustainability Team.

1. **Member Comments:** C. Langlois says generally nice things about the new planner.
2. **Adjournment: 10:29 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Tyra Penn-Gesek, Director of Planning & Development