

SPECIAL MEETING - BAR

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

Friday, August 7, 2020 – 9:00 AM

Location – Riverside Park Bandstand

Attending: J. Blanchette, Chair; B. Davis; J. Hall; S. Lewis; N. O’Leary, R. Waldron; K. Beausoleil, BoS; T. Penn-Gesek, Dir. Planning & Development; Y. Lin, Freeman Co.
Members absent: C. Langlois

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER: 9:04 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. June 12, 2020 Regular Meeting

Davis moves/Lewis seconds to approve. Passes unanimously

3. CORRESPONDENCE – emails, to be discussed under Committee business

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS

K. Beausoleil: work is being done at 1405 Riverside Drive (The old stone mill). The roof was removed on 6 August. New owners intend to continue the structural rehab over the next couple of weeks

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

a. LOTCIP Route 12 sidewalk project – design update

Y. Lin of Freeman Co. submitted preliminary plans to ConnDOT (roughly 30% of contract). ConnDOT responded with several pages of comments and questions, to which Freeman Co. has also supplied responses, which were forwarded back to ConnDOT/NECCOG by T. Penn.

Y. Lin provided handouts to the Committee showing typical cross-sections, aerials of project area and excerpted drawings of discrete areas of the project including Mill Town Grill parking adjustment, and Town Hall parking lot with suggested placement of bus shelter. The suggested adjustment to the parking area in front of Mill Town led to extensive discussion. As suggested by Freeman Co, the area would be moved closer to the intersection at Rawson Ave, resulting in a loss of roughly 6 spaces, but adding potential area for outdoor seating. The current parking is actually not owned by the restaurant, and lies within the ROW. K. Beausoleil emphasizes that the restaurant owner should be brought into the conversation, to avoid generating any ill-will toward to project. Other members of the Committee suggest that changing the configuration of the remaining frontage parking to 2-3 parallel handicapped spots instead of 6 pull-in spots would be a safer option, even though the number of spaces would be further reduced. Improved signage pointing patrons to the shared rear lot is further suggested.

In the area that passes in front of Friendly Market, Y. Lin points out that the Town may need to pursue easements to continue the sidewalk, as the logical path actually traverses privately owned property.

The location suggested for the bus shelter at Town Hall (in front of the post office) does not actually match the traffic pattern of the NECCOG shuttle. The shuttle does a turn-around in the lot to pick up/drop off passengers before continuing north on 12. It is suggested that the shelter should be moved to the area drawn with shrubbery that is parallel to Rte 12, facing into the municipal parking lot.

T. Penn suggests adding an intersection from the east side of Riverside to the newly reconfigured intersection at Blain. Sight-lines crossing from the east side to the west side are challenging. Y. Lin believes it is a better option to have the engineer for the Blain Rd project add the crosswalk. The Committee agrees to that logic, but it is pointed out that those two firms would have to coordinate on that design element, in terms of adding a curb-cut/ramp to the sidewalk. T. Penn will reach out to Provost & Rovero to put them in touch with Freeman. It is further suggested that J. Blanchette and T. Penn work on a letter to ConnDOT to find out when the state anticipates starting their planned work on Rte 12. It would be helpful to everyone if all three projects can be scheduled in a logical progression. Blanchette also points out that it would be a good opportunity to ask ConnDOT to narrow the automobile lanes, while adding a wider lane for cyclists.

b. Blain road intersection design update

D. Held from Provost & Rovero had emailed an update prior to the meeting that ConnDOT has his preliminary plan for review, and that he expects a response soon (note: response from ConnDOT was received the following Monday).

c. John Gumpert liason – update/tax relief, rehabilitation area/zone

K. Beausoleil reports that the BoS approved the resolution at their 4 August meeting. The Rehabilitation Area will be established to match whatever boundaries P&Z designates for the Downtown Mill Rehabilitation District in the revised zoning map. Adoption of the new regs/map is anticipated for some point in September. It is suggested that a press release be written to publicize the adoption of the Rehabilitation Area, so that property owners understand there is an incentive to rehab existing multi-family housing units, as well as develop new multi-units.

d. BAR grant – wayfinding project status

K. Giansanti has provided the synopsis of the live workshop responses and the prior online/paper surveys. She is in process of compiling the first draft of her final report. That contract is expected to extend through September.

e. Other Committee Business

6. MEMBER COMMENTS – none additional

7. ADJOURNMENT – 10:26 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tyra Penn-Gesek
Director of Planning & Development