

SPECIAL MEETING - BAR

Brownfield Area-Wide Revitalization (BAR) Grant Sub- Committee
Friday, June 21, 2019 – 9:00AM
Conference Room
Thompson Town Hall

Minutes

Members Attending: J. Blanchette, Chair; B. Davis; J. Hall; C. Langlois; N. O'Leary
Members Absent: S. Lewis, R. Waldron Staff Attending: K. Beausoleil, T. Penn-Gesek
Others: W. Bugden, J. Guskowski, S. Kellarson (CME): Sean Donohoe

1. CALL TO ORDER – 9:16 a.m.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - May 10, 2019 Regular Meeting
Hall moves and O'Leary seconds to accept the minutes as written
Motion passes unanimously
3. CORRESPONDENCE - None
4. CITIZEN COMMENTS
S. Donohoe's comments raised during the MSRAC portion of the meeting will be addressed in discussion of item 5.a.ii., below
5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS
 - a. CME BAR Grant task updates
 - i. Traffic/parking/pedestrian study
 - Bugden/CME presents a Powerpoint with possible design solutions for a number of intersections: Riverside/Buckley Hill Road; the north intersection of Riverside/Main; Riverside/River; Blain/Riverside; Riverside/Thompson Hill/Park
 - A copy of the Powerpoint will be sent to the committee members for review
 - Proposed solution for **Riverside/Buckley Hill** involves building out an pair of islands to funnel northbound traffic straight up Riverside and create a left-turn area for southbound traffic. Adding a left turn lane from Riverside onto River is also suggested.
 - Blanchette raises a concern that the smaller of the two islands must be mountable to facilitate large trucks turning in that spot.
 - Davis asks if a stoplight might be possible at that spot. Prior warrant studies done for Route 12 at that spot have already denied the possibility
 - Guskowski points out that traffic studies that will be submitted by RMR based on anticipated increases may influence future

response by DOT re: stoplight.

- **River/Buckley Hill (including bike path):** widen/improve the bike path & sidewalk; add left/right turn directional markings at the end of River. The turn onto River from Riverside would be a right hand turn only/one-way at that intersection. River would be two-way only at the exit from the mill parking lot to the Buckley Hill intersection of River. A few options for additional parking on River were discussed; but the most practical solution was to narrow the lane for through-traffic and designate a fire lane for mill access.

- North intersection of **Riverside/Main:** because of the presence of the monument on the island at that spot, it was initially found that there was no practical possible change to the intersection beyond directional signs or additional road markings. Davis asks if the monument can be relocated. Beausoleil confirms that it could. CME will look at the intersection again with that in mind.

- **Blain/Riverside:** CME's rendering shows a reconfigured "T" intersection. Curbs and landscaping would be added to narrow and define the turning points. Suggested one-way access only for Circuit Court. The property shown for possible modification is owned by 630 Riverside (Donohoe confirms this).

- Blanchette wants to know how reconfiguring this intersection can be expedited. Beausoleil believes that the work required could be paid for out of town funds. DOT approval is likely the biggest hurdle. Blanchette suggests, and the committee agrees, that it would be a positive development to show concrete results from the many studies done under MSRAC.

- **Park/Riverside/Thompson Hill Road:** this design is based on assumed future requirements for access to the 630 site at that point. Access to the loop would be from the south point, one way, with an added lane onto the parcel at 630. Exit would be at the north side of that loop around the park island, with dedicated left and right turn lanes.

ii. Zoning regulations revisions -NECOGG Thompson Corridor Development District draft regs

- Guskowski/CME summarizes their purpose in drafting the Downtown Mill District zoning language: the most recent NECCOG draft treats the entire Route 12/131 corridor uniformly; but the differences in the nature of the section between route 200 and the split from 131 are sufficient to warrant separate zoning requirements. The objective is to promote redevelopment and reuse over new development.

- Reuse of existing structures is expedited via simpler as-of-right permits and/or site plan reviews

- A major departure from previous drafts is flexibility in parking requirements. An applicant would not be required to provide a

minimum, but instead would submit a parking plan based on anticipated need, with justification.

- Site dimension requirements would be benchmarked to the existing lot dimensions, rather than prescribed specific set-backs/frontages, etc. This would reduce the need to seek variances.

- Donohoe expressed concerns about language for loading docks being required behind or on the sides of buildings, out of public view, and that current structures would therefore be rendered non-compliant. Existing structures would be grandfathered in. Donohoe further suggested that the phrase "if feasible" be added to that language.

- Blanchette will forward additional comments sent via email by Lewis, who was unable to attend. Blanchette also mentioned that the terms used in the CME draft should be compared for consistency with the definitions provided in the NECCOG document.

- CME will further revised their draft. Blanchette has requested that members of CME/MSRAC be invited to attend when the next P&Z subcommittee meeting to discuss the new regulations is scheduled.

iii. Community Outreach – updated website/video

- The drone video & accompanying website materials are "live" on the town website. There are links to the Bar Grant page are currently active on the MSRAC and EDC pages. The Town Clerk is an admin on the website and can add notification on the homepage when she returns from vacation.

- Guskowski confirms that K. Morander/CME is working on an outline of a wayfinding program, with the intention of having it prepared relatively soon.

b. Regulatory (DEEP/EPA) Update:

i. June 6, 2019 Site meeting and tour

ii. Rexnor/ RMR cost sharing for remediation

iii. headrace issues

- Bugden provides a quick update that things are moving positively. EPA is taking a more active role in assisting with the sticking point from Rexnor. Possibly more concrete news by the July meeting.

- First Selectman Beausoleil was thanked for his efforts arranging the mill tour with the various agencies and other interested parties. The feeling is that the tour helped move the project in a positive direction.

c. River Mill Development (RMR) development progress – covered above

- d. 6/5/19 Branding event summary
 - Feedback from the event was largely positive. Results have been made available to all participants and the statistical results have been made public.
 - e. Other - none
6. MEMBER COMMENTS
- Hall requests an agenda item for the next meeting re: discussing support for flexible incentives for development projects, based on their perceived benefit to the community.
7. ADJOURNMENT – 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tyra Penn-Gesek, Director of Planning and Development