



# TOWN OF THOMPSON

Mill Sites Redevelopment  
Advisory Committee (MSRAC)

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## Regular MEETING- MSRAC

Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee (MSRAC)

Friday – March 10, 2023 – 9:00 AM

Hybrid – Merrill Seney Community Room and Zoom

Zoom recording:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Phlzd8DFmUjtao6woc8unT12UpHe3MI5a4mrUsqPDgp5sXOG98uv4bvvDQ849Ak.H\\_v6OaMTyp3M4yEa?startTime=1678456830000](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Phlzd8DFmUjtao6woc8unT12UpHe3MI5a4mrUsqPDgp5sXOG98uv4bvvDQ849Ak.H_v6OaMTyp3M4yEa?startTime=1678456830000) Passcode: 9&&Bs5Z4

YouTube recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWB5js85b8A>

Members Attending: J. Blanchette – Chair, K. Beausoleil, R. Cournoyer, B. Davis, J. Hall, C. Langlois, S. Lewis

Others Attending: E. Preston – Y. Lin – Freemans Co, American Legion/VFW, A. St Onge – First Selectman, T. Penn-Gesek – Director of Planning & Development

## MINUTES

### 1. CALL TO ORDER – 9:00 a.m.

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- January 13, 2023 Regular Meeting

J. Hall requests correction of a typo in 5b, 2<sup>nd</sup> line should read "...16 Jan. **He** anticipates..."

B. Davis moves/S. Lewis seconds approval of the minutes. Passes unanimously.

- February 10, 2023 Regular Meeting

J. Hall requests correction to the DPW Director's name in 5c line 16 to **J. Tkacik**

S. Lewis moves/R. Cournoyer seconds approval of the minutes. Passes unanimously.

### 3. CORRESPONDENCE - none

### 4. CITIZEN COMMENTS - none

### 5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

#### a. Main Street Reconstruction

Y. Lin provides an update on the status of the design & LOTCIP application. A first draft of the application and the Geotech review was submitted to the committee for comment. Preliminary drainage assessment indicates that the box culvert across from the library is in good condition and does not need to be upgraded. J. Blanchette asks whether the only area that needs a ROW easement is for the crosswalk in the vicinity of St Joseph's church. B. Davis identifies an error in the application on page 6: there are no gas utility lines in Thompson. J. Blanchette asks if Y. Lin is aware of any other potential funding sources, as an alternative to LOTCIP. He believes there may be another appropriate grant program and he will forward J. Blanchette asks T. Penn-Gesek to clarify what she believes the likely timeline to be for the project if funded by LOTCIP. Based on a conversation she had with J. Larkin (NECCOG), two other towns are already approved and in queue; and, given the way in which LOCTIP funding is replenished, she believes that construction would be 4-6 years out. S. Lewis asks about the potential to add another crosswalk across from the funeral home, which would connect to the private walkway from the church to the parking lot. With the apartments being developed in the former school building and the restaurant space across the street next to the funeral home, it does seem logical to add a crosswalk there. The connection would require ROW easement to connect to the private concrete walkway. B. Davis questions whether the ROW line is correctly shown on the rendering. J. Blanchette refers to a hard copy of the survey and confirms that the on-screen rendering is incorrect. C. Langlois asks where the apartment residents will be parking, which is then shown on screen for reference: it is the secondary lot immediately adjacent to the school building. Y. Lin will update the application as requested and then send to T. Penn to sign and submit to NECCOG for the LOTCIP funding request.

## **b. Swanson Park –**

### **a. Meet with veterans – get ideas, reviews possible concepts, discuss shrub removal**

### **b. possible T-Mobile Placemaking grant - \$50,000 shovel ready project**

**E. Preston** is welcomed as a representative of the local Veterans' organizations. **S. Lewis** presents the progression of the concept sketches he has developed for the project. The original concept shows a rectangular plaza with a pair of terraced steps facing the memorials, which are proposed to be relocated away from the edge of the road. An additional structure is shown, as a potential location for seating under cover or ceremonies. That plan was estimated to require more funding than the \$50k grant program would allow. A second iteration of the plan is shown which is simpler, does not include the shelter and locates the plaza in the path of the existing walkway. The third iteration shows a widened walkway that takes a more meandering path, with the monuments arranged along it and ornamental flowering trees. **S. Lewis** calls attention to the potential to add a crosswalk from the top of the curve in the road to the new patio area at Mill Town Grille. **A. St Onge** asks whether the project is still meant to include the relocation of the monument from the northern intersection of Main St and Riverside. That has been the intention of the Committee, but the question is posed to **E. Preston**. He indicates that he believes the local veterans have mixed opinions on that topic. **T. Penn** asks **E. Preston** whether the regional or national arms of the Veterans' organizations have funds available to contribute to the project. Other fundraising strategies are discussed, such as crowdfunding from the community to donate the cost of individual trees or benches. **C. Langlois** expresses her concerns that the project should not be broken into small phases that don't have enough impact on their own. **T. Penn** points out that the cost estimates haven't been developed yet, so it isn't clear yet how much can be done at one time. The next step is therefore to develop the cost estimates for the third option (with the ornamental trees). **C. Langlois** emphasizes her hope that, even if it is phased, that the phases are done in ways that are clearly impactful. **S. Lewis** suggests that the third option, while representing a phased approach, does look like a full project and would have high visual impact when completed. **A. St Onge** states that she believes that the project would generate a lot of community support in a crowdfunding campaign. **J. Blanchette** suggests providing copies of the drawings to the wider membership of the American Legion and VFW for their input. She asks **E. Preston** if he thinks there would be any objection to the Town removing the overgrown shrubs as a first step. He doesn't think there would be any objection, but he would like to have more of the veterans' feedback. There is a meeting scheduled at the American Legion for 14 March. **C. Langlois** asks if they can be added to the meeting agenda to present the ideas to the membership, which he suggests would be possible. **S. Lewis** also brings up the possibility of adding angled parking spaces on Market St, as shown on a site drawing provided by **J. Blanchette's** office. **A. St Onge** sends a message to **L. Martin** of the American Legion to ask to be included on the meeting agenda for 14 March. **E. Preston** asks whether moving other memorials in Town to Swanson Park has been considered.

### **c. 65 Main Street**

**T. Penn** gives the update: Construction documents are being prepared by Silver Petrucelli and are nearly complete. Upon receipt the project will go out to bid, with B. Santos and T. Penn acting as project managers. The contract for the second grant award (programming) from USDA is still pending but is expected soon. **J. Blanchette** asks if the haz mat abatement is eating up a lot of the renovation funding (it is). **R. Cournoyer** asks what the USDA grant is funding, which **T. Penn** summarizes: an extended public workshop process to develop programming for the facility, led by a partnership of five non-profit partners and the Town.

### **d. Ongoing Committee business**

#### **a. Riverside Drive LOTCIP Sidewalk Project**

The project is currently dormant until spring. NC will return in the spring to complete a punchlist: installation of the bus shelter and the completion of the concrete plaza in front of the restaurant. The building owner has confirmed that he will not be pursuing the lease of the ROW from the State.

#### **b. Blain Road Intersection**

**A. St Onge** provides the update: she has signed the agreement with NC, but the schedule has not yet been established. She will follow up with the contractor to confirm the schedule, which should dovetail with the completion of the LOTCIP project.

#### **c. River Mill**

DECD has the final contract with their legal department. Once received and signed by all parties, brownfield cleanup can proceed.

**d. 630 Riverside Dr**

The UConn student team is working on their design project for the greenspace and LID concepts, to be shared by the Town once either a developer completes a private sale, or when the Town is in a position to go to RFP to solicit a developer. **C. Langlois** asks why the project was removed from the tax sale in 2022. **T. Penn** clarifies that the tax sale process would be high-risk for the Town, since there is no way to prevent an unqualified buyer from bidding. Because the property is a brownfield, there are regulatory and environmental requirements that would be very difficult for a developer to navigate who does not have specific knowledge of those processes.

**e. Other/New Committee Business**

**T. Penn** mentions that a grant program has opened up that could potentially fund the fabrication and installation of the Wayfinding program which was developed by CME for the Town in 2019. She has asked for an updated cost estimate from Graphics Unlimited, after which she will develop and submit an application.

**6. MEMBER COMMENTS – none additional**

**7. ADJOURNMENT - R. Cournoyer moves to adjourn at 10:08 a.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Tyra Penn-Gesek**

**Director of Planning & Development**