



# TOWN OF THOMPSON

Mill Sites Redevelopment  
Advisory Committee (MSRAC)

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## Regular MEETING- MSRAC

Mill Sites Redevelopment Advisory Committee (MSRAC)

Friday – February 10, 2023 – 9:00 AM

Hybrid – Merrill Seney Community Room and Zoom

Zoom Recording Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/oHhK7k5llUqk3hz5EYFCDR-CE\\_8xQyrm5VrBS\\_TS8Lv8lSwMx3WDD14all6LuLRP.CehHgG6h3jO1aOWI?startTime=1676037863000](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/oHhK7k5llUqk3hz5EYFCDR-CE_8xQyrm5VrBS_TS8Lv8lSwMx3WDD14all6LuLRP.CehHgG6h3jO1aOWI?startTime=1676037863000)

Passcode: y+bhmn@6

YouTube Recording Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lOGuLAy9XE>

**Members Attending:** J. Blanchette – Chair, R. Cournoyer, J. Hall, C. Langlois, S. Lewis

**Staff Attending:** Tyra Penn-Gesek – Director of Planning & Development; Joe Tkacik – Director of Public Works

**Others Attending:** Y. Lin – Freeman Companies LLC

## Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER - 9:04 a.m.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 13, 2023 MSRAC Regular Meeting  
Postponed until March meeting
3. CORRESPONDENCE: None
4. CITIZEN COMMENTS: None
5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS
  - a. **Main Street Reconstruction**

Y. Lin provides an update on the ongoing design for the reconstruction of the Main St roadway and sidewalks. The project includes all of Main St itself, was recently amended to include the sidewalks where it extends north from Main St to its existing terminus on Rte 12. The proposed project will include a full-depth (18-inch) reconstruction of the roadway, designed to meet CTDOT standards for 20-year service life. Sidewalks will be upgraded for ADA compliance. The only gap in the project will be the sidewalks on the State-owned bridge. An easement will be required from St Joseph's for a small section that passes over their private ROW. All drainage structures are planned for replacement as well. The project will be submitted by Freeman Co to the LoTCIP grant program through NECCOG. That submission is anticipated by the end of February. The current project estimate is \$3.3 million, which would be 100% covered by the LoTCIP grant if awarded. The drainage upgrades are expected to be the most expensive part of the project. J. Blanchette asks if there are any Town owned parcels in the project area that would be suitable for overland stormwater flow. Y. Lin states that the new catchbasins will improve the water quality, regardless; but Freeman

can posit additional stormwater options based on input from DPW/J&D. T. Penn asks whether locations for streetlights were included in the design SOW. They were not, and the project estimate is currently at the upper limit of the LoTCIP award range, so it will not be feasible to add that into the project. S. Lewis asks if bike paths had ever been considered as part of this design. Y. Lin confirm that the road is too narrow to accommodate dedicated bike lanes.

b. **Additional streetlights on utility poles over new sidewalk**

The BoS did vote at a recent meeting to approve the addition of the new recommended streetlights along Rte 12. J. Blanchette confirms that an email thread was initiated between the First Selectman and Eversource regarding the new lights.

c. **Swanson Park - possible T-Mobile Placemaking grant - \$50,000 shovel ready project**

A concept plan drawn by S. Lewis was shared with the committee. It shows a proposed first phase of a project to renovate the park. The existing footpath is incorporated into the new design, leading to a rectangular slab to house the monuments and host memorial services, with seating. This plan would require cutting down or ripping out the existing yew bushes, which obscure the monuments and obstruct the sightlines on Rte 12. This phase of the project was developed in order to meet the target budget of \$50k (the maximum ask for the quarterly T-Mobile grants). S. Lewis asks if any feedback was received from the local veterans' groups. The First Selectman did get positive feedback from the American Legion, but no specific recommendations have been received from the Legion or the VFW. J. Blanchette reminds the committee that the goal is to invite Legion/VFW members to the March meeting for their specific input and (weather allowing) a site walk. T. Penn will remind the First Selectman to extend the invitation to the veterans ahead of the March MSRAC meeting. Regarding the new crosswalk shown on the concept plan, T. Penn suggests that she could reach out to V. Staroverov at CT DOT to see if the Dept's upcoming crosswalk project could include a change order to delete the problematic crosswalk at the convenience store & add the one suggested in this drawing. T. Tkacik raises the possibility of DPW cutting back or ripping out the yew bushes as part of their spring work schedule. Options for trimming/removal/planting alternatives are discussed. The committee members generally agree that the best option is to pull the bushes and either seed the area with grass or beautify the area with annuals as a temporary solution. J. Takcik also suggests planting daffodils or tiger lilies to naturalize within the entire park. **S. Lewis moves to recommend to the BoS to cut down or remove the bushes for safety purposes, and in anticipation of future improvements to the park. J. Hall seconds.** Passes unanimously. J. Blanchette will draft that letter of recommendation to the BoS. Next meeting of the Selectmen is 21 Feb. J. Blanchette asks T. Penn if she has enough to start the grant application. T. Penn requests slight changes to the concept drawing to clarify which items are in the phase currently proposed for the project; and she would like to know more details about the materials proposed, in order to create a competent project budget. J. Blanchette asks if the design can be modified to add more parking spaces on Market St by making them angle-in instead of parallel. S. Lewis points out that doing so would likely require taking land away from the park itself, which would also add costs T. Penn clarifies that the initial goal of submitting the application for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter is unlikely. Probably the application would be prepared and submitted for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter rolling deadline.

d. **65 Main Street**

T. Penn provides updates for all active elements of the project: Silver Petrucelli has provided hard copy of an initial concept drawing, and haz mat testing was done by Fuss & O'Neill and that report has been received. There is extensive lead (as expected) and some asbestos present. T. Penn and B. Santos have had a con call with the architect to discuss the progress so far, and further refine the details for the subsequent construction documents. Once those are received (estimated Feb/March), then the RFP for the renovation will be issued. Funds for renovation have been received from the FED and can be accessed as soon as construction is underway. The final executed contract for programming has not been received back from USDA yet, but that is under review by the agency. T. Penn mentions to the committee that EDC's main ask for this year's budget cycle is funding for a program to market the revitalization of Main St. She requests that the members show support for EDC in the upcoming budget cycle. J. Blanchette asks the members if one of them would like to take on

writing a letter of support from MSRAC, to submit to BoF once those meetings start in earnest. R. Cournoyer volunteers to work on it. T. Penn and J. Blanchette will assist as needed. R. Cournoyer also asks about the plan for dealing with the identified haz mat in the building. B. Santos and T. Penn have been very clear with the architect that the project costs are not to skimp on any required abatement work, even if it cuts into other parts of the project budget.

**e. Ongoing Committee business**

**a. Riverside Drive LOTCIP Sidewalk Project**

Essentially dormant until the contractor returns in the spring

**b. Blain Road Intersection**

NC Inc provided an estimate for the project of \$112k, reflecting some of the changes made to the plan such as mountable granite curbing. J. Blanchette still has to arrange with Chief Sharpe to meet on site to discuss needs of the fire dept for access to draw water from the French River. T. Penn will make a point of attending that meeting. J. Tkacik points out that he has not received a copy of the final plans. T. Penn confirms she will send the current plans and estimates to him immediately following this meeting.

**c. River Mill**

The brownfield grant financial proposal is fully signed by all local parties and in the hands of DECD. The only thing holding the project back from starting is a signed contract from the State. That is anticipated "soon," according to correspondence between T. Penn and DECD.

**d. 630 Riverside Dr**

The UConn student team is working on their design project for a portion of the project. 2 offers were made to the current owner by a private developer to buy the parcel, but both have been declined thus far. Until the project at 929 is active and underway, the only option is to wait to take further action. J. Blanchette asks about the FEMA mapping, but aside from the agency accepting the appeal submitted contesting the rise in the flood level, there are no further updates..

**f. Other/New Committee Business – None additional**

**6. MEMBER COMMENTS** - J. Blanchette thanks the members for attending.

**7. ADJOURNMENT – 10:15 a.m.**

Respectfully Submitted, Tyra Penn-Gesek – Director of Planning & Development.